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UNDER THE TREES.

BY RITA.

Under the blossoming chestnut-trees,
Where glittering sunlight softly played,
And, kissed by every passing breeze,
The nodding branches gently swayed,
We loved to wonder, 'mid perfume,
Whose balmy sweetness filled the air;
And blessed the brightness of the bloom
That bade our hearts such welcome there.

What whispered words of love were brought
To cheer our hearts beneath the shade!
How many a gay and gladsome thought
Sprang forth, in beauty all arrayed!
As though the sweetness of the scene,
And all the brightness of the flowers,
Entwined about our hearts had been
To make their sunny gladness ours!

And, though the later years have cast
Their length upon our early dreams,
We love to wander in the past,
Where all its freshest fragrance streams.
We love to turn our wearied sight
To where the soft and rippling breeze
Lets in the gleams of golden light
Between the shadows of the trees.

And as the sunshine softly plays
In glittering radiance as of yore,
We feel the brightness of its rays
Come stealing through our hearts once more;
And, 'mid the store of sweet perfume
That floats upon the balmy air,
We bless the brightness of the bloom
That bids our hearts such welcome there!

A FATAL DOWER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HIS WEDDED WIFE," "LADYBIRD'S PENITENCE," "WE KISSED AGAIN," "ROBIN," "BUNCHIE," ETC.

CHAPTER III.—[CONTINUED.]

"SING something," Mrs. Rutledge said presently — "one of my favorites, please."

"You have so many," he answered laughingly, turning his head with a smiling glance at her. "What shall it be?"

"That German thing you sang on Tuesday," she said, leaning back in her chair, but turning her face towards the piano.

As Stephen began to play, Frank moved restlessly across the room, and taking up a station near Sibyl, began apparently examining the china and articles of virtu on the shelves of an open cabinet near her. His sister was looking at some photographs of Sibyl which had been taken in London soon after her marriage.

Sidney's face was turned to the fire, and her eyes were fixed upon its red glow, as she sat silent and motionless, to all appearance listening to the music, although really not one note of the song reached her confused senses.

She felt strange and bewildered, as if she had suddenly been awakened from a dream which she was trying to understand. And indeed the past few weeks had been like a confused dream to her.

What had she done? she was asking herself.

She had given a promise which she ought to have died rather than give, she had engaged herself to a man whom she did not love and who did not love her, and she had failed utterly in her attempt to win him from the mad infatuation which held him enchained.

What could she do?

How would it all end? How would it all end?

Stephen's sweet cultivated tenor voice rose in the immortal song of Heine which tells of the love of the palm and the pine; but the words which reached Sidney's ears as she sat were not Heine's words, nor were they part of the same wretched dream from which she had not yet roused herself!

"You shall hear me!" whispered the husky eager tones. "To-night he will be away—— No, I will not be silent! You have driven me mad, and must take the consequences!"

The sweet tenor voice ceased; then came one or two soft lingering chords upon the piano, then silence; and with a great effort Sidney turned from the fire and looked round hurriedly.

Stephen had left the piano, Frank was in his former place near her, Chrissie's fair head was still bent over the photographs, and Mrs. Rutledge was leaning over them with her, her voice calm and even as usual as she answered Miss Greville's remark.

It was snowing softly when they prepared to leave the Hall, Sibyl going with them, and standing, a tall stately figure, on the threshold of the grand old house of which she was mistress.

She had caught up a light fleecy white shawl and thrown it over her head, and she looked wonderfully beautiful.

Frank was standing by her side, talking eagerly in a low tone tone, and it was Stephen who put the girls into Doctor Arnold's comfortable brougham.

"When are you going to Lindhurst, Sidney?" he said, as he drew the fur rug carefully over her.

"On Thursday," she answered, forcing a smile.

"After the ball?" he interrogated.

"Yes, after the ball."

"How long shall you be away?" he asked as he held the little gloved hand for a moment, a restless little hand, which fluttered in his strong clasp.

"Only a few days," she answered. "Tell Jarvis to drive on, please. We need not wait until Frank has finished his adieu."

Stephen drew back, and they drove off; and Sidney, leaning back in the carriage, took away with her a picture she never forgot—a picture of the tall slim woman in her soft velvet draperies, and handsome haggard young man standing on the broad stone steps.

And she never recalled that in the future without a throb of pain.

* * * * * *

The snow which had begun to fall so lightly on the afternoon of the day on which Mrs. Rutledge had received her husband's remonstrances with such indifference, continued to fall at intervals during the whole of the next day, that fixed for the Hunt ball.

So that by the evening there was a soft thick covering upon the hills and the house-tops, and a great deal of slush in the streets, which deadened the sound of the vehicles that thronged the High Street on their way to the Assembly Rooms.

All Ashford was in a state of suppressed excitement about the entertainment.

The Hunt ball was always looked forward to by the young people of the neighborhood, and this year it would have unusual interest owing to two or three circumstances in connection with it.

One was that the Earl de la Poer had announced his intention of being present; and as he was young, wealthy, and unmarried, the young ladies felt that there was a more than ordinary inducement to look one's best on the occasion.

And another cause for excitement was the fact that Squire Rutledge's beautiful young wife would make her first public appearance.

Eager was the curiosity shown as to what she would wear and whether the famous Rutledge diamonds would grace the assembly.

Moreover, Miss Daunt of Lambswold was to make her debut; and of course Sidney Arnold would be present, and there would be a good opportunity for seeing how she liked her fiance's devotion to Mrs. Rutledge, of which all the Ashford gossips had been speaking for some weeks past.

The Squire had had more or less reason for the injudiciously-spoken remonstrances which he had made to his young wife, for Ashford gossip had coupled her name far more freely with Frank Greville's than they had had any grounds for doing; still, although the stone of gossip gathers as it rolls, like a snowball, there was no doubt that there was some cause for comment.

Several times in the week Frank Greville might have been met on the road to the Hall, riding his pretty chestnut mare and dressed with even more than his usual care.

Whenever Mrs. Rutledge drove into town, he was always at hand by some strange chance or other; and Sibyl had taken a fancy to visit Sidney Arnold often, at whose house it was of course only natural that Frank should be constantly found.

Many of Sidney's callers, on being ushered into the charming old drawing-room of the Gray House, had found Mrs. Rutledge there, beautiful and radiant in her costly dark furs, and Frank Greville hovering about her chair.

Of course Sidney was present also—pretty pale Sidney, with a wistful look in her velvety dark eyes; but her presence was evidently no constraint on the infatuated young man.

The Squire himself was looking moody and dissatisfied and ill.

It served him right, ancient maidens said nodding their heads vindictively over their afternoon tea.

What need had there been for him to choose a wife entirely unsuited to him in every respect, when he might have chosen a dozen well-born women nearer his own age, *et-cetera?*

He would be sure to suffer for his folly, and he would receive but little compassion. Miss Nell had always been a designing flirt who, having failed in her endeavors to win Stephen Daunt, had accepted Mr. Rutledge as the next best parti, and who ought to be ashamed of her present conduct.

So the busy tongues wagged, and, if an echo of their chatter came to Sidney Arnold's ears, she gave no sign that it reached her.

She was always bright and gay, very gentle—oh, so gentle!—to Frank, and, if she had lost the pretty imperious manner which had once been so characteristic of her, it was but natural now that she was an engaged young lady.

Sidney Arnold, holding back the curtains from the window of her father's study thought how redly the lamps in the High Street gleamed through the falling snow, and how pretty the country must look under its white veil, and wondered slightly at her lack of excitement about the ball, and sighed as she dropped the curtains and came back slowly into the room.

She was dressed for the ball, and only waited now for her father, who had been called away to a patient just as they were starting.

Last year such a contretemps would have seriously annoyed, Miss Arnold, who liked to be in good time, knowing how eagerly her appearance was looked for by the best waltzers in Ashford; but on this evening there was no impatience or annoyance on the fair young face on which the light of Doctor Arnold's lamp fell so softly; it looked a little weary and indifferent, yet very lovely.

Sidney was dressed in white, with extreme simplicity, but with exquisite taste, and no dress could have been more becoming to her than the soft flowing folds of Indian muslin trimmed with a profusion of costly lace.

There was always an affectation of simplicity about Miss Arnold's attire, the Ashford gossips said among themselves rather spitefully.

Her dresses, however simple, were invariably of such material that they were costly and they always fitted perfectly and were very becoming.

She had been waiting about a quarter of an hour when her father came in, hurriedly apologized for the delay, and wrapping his daughter in her white cloak, led her out to the carriage.

"I think I must get a chaperon for you Sidney," he said, with a little laugh, as they drove away. "What do you think?"

Sidney laughed also.

"I don't think I want one," she answered. "And we are very happy together, papa, just you and I."

"Yes," he said ruefully. "But soon there will be only 'I,' Sidney and no 'you,' and then what shall poor 'I' do?"

The distance from the Gray House to the Royal George Hotel, where the Assembly Rooms were, was but short; but many carriages were waiting to deposit their freights and the Doctor's coachman had to wait patiently until his turn came.

Looking out, Sidney glanced at the brilliantly-lighted hotel.

In the entrance-hall she saw Frank waiting, flushed, eager and excited, looking very handsome in his evening-dress, a white camelia in his button-hole.

"I see Frank," Doctor Arnold said, smiling, "waiting impatiently, Sidney, and no doubt anathemizing me."

Sidney smiled faintly—a pale, almost a sorrowful smile.

She knew for whom Frank was waiting so impatiently, and that just in front of them was Sibyl's well-appointed carriage, the snow resting lightly on the servants' handsome liveries.

But she said nothing; nor was there any surprise on her face when, their carriage being at last able to drive up to the porch, she found that Frank had disappeared; for her quick glance had seen him go up the wide carpeted staircase beside a tall, white-clad figure, whose long, glistening train lay heavily upon the red baize which covered the stairs.

"Why, Frank must have grown tired of waiting!" said Doctor Arnold, as he escorted his daughter into the hall. "I am sorry, dear."

"It does not matter, papa," Sidney answered, lingering a little.

She did not want to follow that long white train immediately.

"Come, my dear—what are you waiting for? The ladies' room is upstairs."

"Yes, papa; I was just noticing how pretty the lamps look through the snow."

Lady Eva and Dolly were leaving the ladies' dressing-room as Sidney reached it.

With them was Sibyl Rutledge; and, used as the young girl was to her beauty, she almost started as her eyes fell upon Sibyl, so wonderfully beautiful did she look in the rich dress of white moire which left her shoulders and arms bare, while the Rutledge diamonds gleamed on her milk-white throat and wrists, and in the masses of her golden hair.

"I am a grass-widow to-night," she said, laughing, as she greeted Sidney. "Mr. Rutledge was tired, and would not come, and Lady Eva has been kind enough to take me under her wing."

"Sidney, how white you are!" Dolly whispered, lingering beside her for a moment. "Is anything wrong?"

"No," Sidney answered simply.

And Dolly looked at her wistfully as she joined her mother.

Then the three ladies swept away, Dolly radiant in fleecy white tulle with a string of large pearls round her pretty throat.

Never would Sidney Arnold forget that ball and the feeling of dread and terror which possessed her from the moment her eyes rested upon Sibyl's beautiful face.

For some few moments after she entered the ball-room she was like a person moving in a dream; all was confused and bewildering.

Mechanically she answered the greetings of her acquaintances, mechanically she handed her programme to the eager young men who thronged around her.

In the same dazed manner she glided away when her first partner claimed her.

She remembered it all afterwards—how she had talked and danced and smiled, as people must do in society, no matter how their hearts may be aching.

She remembered the pretty gaily-decorated ball-room, the band in a gallery at one end, skilfully concealed in an artistic bower of greenery, the pink-lined lace curtains dividing the cosy flirting nooks and recesses from the ball-room, the soft rustle of the silken skirts, the dreamy waltz-music, the scent of flowers, and the little, swift, untiring satin-shod feet moving so unceasingly over the polished floor.

All these things she remembered afterwards, although just then she saw them as if they belonged to a dream-world in which she was living.

"Strange thing for the Squire to let his wife come here alone to-night!" said one of her partners, as they were resting during a waltz, sitting in a recess from which they had a good view of the ball-room.

"He was tired," Sidney answered wearily, slowly moving her white fan to and fro.

"Not a very good reason, is it? She is awfully handsome. Every one is talking of her. Greville seems—— I beg your pardon, Miss Arnold; I really forgot that ——"

He broke off, coloring hotly in great confusion.

"Don't apologise," Sidney returned, with a smile. "If you were going to say that Frank admires her very much, you are quite right; he does."

"Every one admires her. What a pretty little thing Miss Daunt is! His lordship seems smitten."

Sidney's eyes softened as they glanced in the direction in which he was looking, and rested on Dolly, who was dancing unweariedly and evidently thoroughly enjoying her first ball.

Her partner was Lord de la Poer, a tall slim young fellow, with a smooth closely-cropped dark head and a budding moustache, who seemed to have eyes for no one but his pretty little partner.

Suddenly Sidney rose.

"Do you mind not finishing this dance, Mr. Erne?" she said. "It is so very warm here. I should like to go out for a little while."

"I will find you a quiet spot," he answered, smiling. "I often spend two or three days here, you know, and know the mysteries of the labyrinth."

He piloted her skilfully through the billows of silk and lace and tulle, and led her out of the ball-room, across a passage, and on to a lobby—a large, square, dimly-lighted landing, with one large window overlooking the street.

With a little sigh of relief, Sidney sank down on the large old-fashioned window-seat.

The dim light and cool air were intensely refreshing after the heated atmosphere of the ball-room.

Opposite to the window a door stood partly open, leading into a little sitting-room where the gas was lighted, but turned down rather low, and from which came the murmuring sound of voices.

"Very jolly here, isn't it, not?" Mr. Erne said, leaning against the window and looking out into the street. "How queer and pretty it looks, Miss Arnold!"

Sidney turned her head languidly and looked out.

The scene below was "queer and pretty," as he said.

The moon was at the full, and the snow had ceased falling.

The street was comparatively quiet and deserted.

Only now and then a dark figure passed over the white surface.

The quaint old gabled houses rose dark and stern-looking.

One or two windows were lighted, but it was already late, and most were in darkness.

It was a quaint study in black and white, full of light and shadow.

From the hall of the hotel a broad, red glow of light fell on the pavement in front of it.

Presently the music from the ball-room ceased.

The waltz was over, and Sidney rose regretfully.

"You need not move, Miss Arnold," the young man said, smiling. "Unless you want to dance the next, you are safe here. No one knows of this retiring-place but myself, I think."

"I won't dance the next," Sidney returned, smiling a little. "I am very tired and it is a quadrille; my partner won't mind, I dare say."

"I'm not so sure of that! Who is it?"

"I don't quite know," Sidney said lightly, "and it is too dark to see here. But I am sure no sensible person would object to miss a quadrille. Don't let me keep you, Mr. Erne."

Rather reluctantly the young man went away.

Sidney, left alone, leaned her pretty head against the window and closed her eyes wearily, for indeed her excuse of fatigue was perfectly justifiable.

She felt weary to the last degree with that mental weariness which is so much harder to bear than any physical fatigue, however great, can be.

Only once that evening had Frank approached her, and the one valse they had danced together had been a very dreary performance.

Frank's manner had been so strange, so hasty and nervous and excited, that Sidney had been struck by it and considerably alarmed.

His face, too, was flushed.

His eyes were bright with a strange, feverish lustre.

His speech was so incoherent that the girl had at first felt a faint feeling of disgust at the thought that he had taken too much wine.

The valse over, he had taken Sidney back to her seat, lingered a moment by her side, as if he had something to say to her, then moved away without having uttered a word.

A few minutes afterwards Sidney had seen him beside Mrs. Rutledge, looking haggard and miserable, his face changing at a word or look from her.

How cruel she was, Sidney thought bitterly, as she rested her white brow against the cold pane of glass, and looked out dreamily into the quiet street—how cruel—as cruel as she was beautiful!

She played with Frank, torturing him, driving him half mad with misery and pain one day, and raising him to the seventh heaven the next.

How could she do it? the girl then wondered.

How would it all end?

Not even Sidney herself could have told the reasons which made her accept Frank Greville for her future husband on that day when he had come to her dazed, maddened, and heart-broken at Miss Nell's engagement.

She was very fond of him, fond with that affection which had grown up with her since they had been girl-and-boy playmates together, and which was less likely than hate even to change into the love that men and women feel when they love "closest and sweetest."

It may have been her own anguish which made her more inclined to pity Frank.

When he begged her to save him from himself, she had yielded, hoping to save him from yet greater misery, and to save not him only.

When she learned that Sibyl Neil's betrothed, against whom Frank had uttered such desperate threats, was not Stephen Daunt, it was too late, her word had been given, and Sidney would not draw back now.

She would be true to Frank in the spirit and in the letter.

She might save him from sin and misery perhaps.

Sidney Arnold little guessed as she sat in the dim light, leaning her pretty head against the window, how soon her freedom would be given to her, and in what terrible circumstances!

The quiet and solitude were very grateful to Sidney.

It was so pleasant to close her burning, aching eyes, to let the forced smiles fade away, and to let the little hands droop in utter weariness.

From the ball-room came the sound of gay dance-music—the band was playing the Madame Angot quadrilles.

Without, the street was quiet and deserted.

Through the open door on the opposite side of the landing came a confused murmur of voices, which at first Sidney did not heed, until they rose louder, and she recognised Frank's voice, eager, passionate, now threatening, now pleading, mingling with a woman's voice, a clear metallic voice, speaking angrily, but unsteadily, as of fear mingled with anger.

Sidney rose hurriedly.

Whither could she go to escape hearing that which was not meant for her to hear?

What should she do?

Ought she to go into the room and interrupt them? What was going on?

As she stood trembling and irresolute, some one came hurriedly up a back staircase, and, catching sight of the slender white figure on the dim landing, hastily approached her.

"Your carriage is here," Stephen Daunt's voice said. "Come, do not linger. It is worse than foolish."

Sidney drew back, trying to speak; but her dry parched lips were powerless.

"Come!" he repeated imperatively, taking her hand. "Come, do not—— Why, Sidney!"

"There is some mistake," she said, drawing back.

"Yes!" he muttered. "What are you doing here, child? Why don't you go back to the ball-room? I was looking for Sibyl—for Mrs. Rutledge. Shall I take you back?"

"I need not trouble you," Sidney said proudly, moving away from him.

Just as she uttered the words, the sitting-room door was thrown open violently, a man rushed out, dashed past Sidney, brushing against her, and disappeared down the side-staircase.

Hasty as his movements were and dimly lighted as the landing was, Sidney recognised Frank Greville.

A terrible dread almost overpowered her.

With a startled exclamation Stephen turned away and entered the room.

With a reluctance and terror she could not overcome Sidney turned her eyes towards the open door.

But there was nothing terrible there.

She saw only a beautiful woman in shining white drapery, with diamonds glittering on her throat and wrists, who ran to Stephen and caught his arm with both her hands and raised her agitated, pale face to his.

Sidney did not wait to see or hear any more.

She turned away and groped her way back to the ball-room, where she found that they were dancing a waltz, and that her partner was looking for her.

Neither Greville nor Mrs. Rutledge reappeared in the ball-room that evening.

It was nearly two hours later when Stephen came in, looking rather pale, but easy and languid as usual, to give his mother his arm to lead her to the carriage.

"Hasn't it been a lovely ball?" Dolly said, as Lord de la Poer wrapped her in her white cloak, and some other cavalier performed the same office for Sidney. "Have you enjoyed it, Sidney?"

"Yes," Sidney answered, wondering if there was such a sensation as enjoyment in the world.

It seemed to her that there was nothing but misery and unrest.

CHAPTER IV.

"MISS Sidney—Miss Sidney dear!"

Sidney opened her heavy eyes languidly.

"What is it, Bessie?"

"It seems a pity to wake you, Miss Sidney dear; but, if you want to go by the ten o'clock train, you must get up. It is gone nine now. I have brought you up some tea."

Sidney raised herself wearily from her pillows, wondering why her head ached so and why it required such an effort to rouse herself, until, looking rather stupidly around the room, she saw the dress she had worn on the night before thrown upon a chair, the flowers faded and withered upon her table, and the little satin shoes upon the floor.

She remembered then how long she had lain tossing in her pretty white bed before she had slept, how often she had got up and looked out into the street, where the snow was falling, and how towards dawn she had fallen asleep from sheer fatigue and weariness.

"Is it snowing still, Bessie?" she asked, as she sat up and took the cup of tea from the hands of the kindly old woman who had been her mother's nurse, and had come to Ashford with Mrs. Arnold a comely middle-aged woman, whom the fair young bride loved and trusted and depended upon, and to whose care she had left her little child.

"Yes, my dear, but not so heavily as it snowed early this morning," Bessie answered. "I am afraid you are very tired, Miss Sidney? Was it a nice ball, dearie?"

"Yes, I think so," Sidney said, drinking her tea thirstily, for her lips were dry and parched.

Bessie glanced at her for a moment as she busied herself about the room, folding the pretty crushed ball-skirts and putting the little shoes away.

Usually Sidney awoke after a ball fresh and unwearied and full of merry chatter and pleasant descriptions of the entertainment.

This morning, however, she looked pale and haggard and weary.

"Perhaps you had better rest to-day, Miss Sidney," she suggested, "and not go to Lindhurst until to-morrow."

"No; Miss Bevis will be expecting me," Sidney said, slowly. "Will you take the cup, Bessie, and get my bath ready?"

"Your hand is very hot, Miss Sidney," the woman said gently, as she obeyed. "Are you sure you are well?"

"Quite well, Bessie. Is papa at home?"

"No, Miss Sidney."

"Gone out already?" the young girl exclaimed, in a tone of disappointment.

"Yes, quite an hour ago."

"Where to, Bessie? Do you know?" she asked.

Mrs. Sandys hesitated.

"I think there was an accident, my dear," she said, keeping her face turned away from the bed. "A man on horseback came, and the Doctor went off at once. Will you have quite a cold bath, this morning, Miss Sidney? It is very cold out."

"Never mind; the cold water will freshen me up."

Sidney's toilet was usually a very expeditious business.

This morning, though, her movements were so languid and inert that Mrs. Sandys could not help again asking if she was quite well.

The girl herself was almost startled by the white face reflected in her looking-glass.

"You have packed my things, I suppose, Bessie?"

"Yes, dearie; all is ready for you. Try to make a good breakfast, my dear; it will be so cold travelling."

"Yes," Sidney answered, shivering a little as she stood for a moment in the window looking out into the street, so pure and white, for it had been snowing heavily, and as yet there had not been much movement or many passers-by.

"You must not linger, Miss Sidney," Bessie said hastily. "You have no time to spare."

"Don't fidget, Bessie! If I do not go at ten, there is another train at twelve thirty."

"I think the Doctor wished you to go early, Miss Sidney."

Sidney turned quickly.

"Why?"

"I—I—I don't know, dearie; but it soon grows dark now," Mrs. Sandys answered, stammering a little.

"It is only a two hours' journey," Sidney said laughingly. "But I will hurry, Bessie; still I cannot go without seeing dear papa."

"I am quite sure the doctor would not like you to miss your train on that account, Miss Sidney," the old woman remarked, hurriedly.

"Are you? Well, I am sure papa would not like me to go without saying good-bye to him," Sidney declared. "What are you thinking of, Bessie?"

"I don't want you to be travelling after dusk, dearie," the old woman said, gently. "You are not very strong, and you have your mother's delicate chest, too, you know."

"You think I have, you dear fussy old thing," Sidney answered, smiling and shaking her head as she left the room.

As the door closed upon her, the smile faded, and her face wore a sad and anxious expression as she passed along the long old-fashioned corridor and went down-stairs, a pretty, graceful figure in her close-fitting dress of fine dark-blue serge.

The fire was blazing up cheerily in the dining-room, and a servant hurried up with hot coffee and eggs.

Sidney did not feel inclined to fulfil Bessie's injunction.

Instead of applying herself to her breakfast, she sat down by the table and glanced around the room.

"Is Doctor Elliot out also?" she asked, as the old man-servant put the dish near her and took off the covers.

"Yes, Miss Sidney."

"Do you know where he has gone, Benson?"

"He followed the master immediately," Benson said quietly, and, perhaps to avoid further questioning, left the room.

Sidney glanced around her anxiously.

Something was wrong, she thought, and the servants did not care to tell her even what they knew.

What was the mystery?

Her father had evidently departed in hot haste, for a pile of letters, some of them unopened, lay beside his plate, the envelope of one partly opened, then evidently dropped in haste.

Had there been an accident somewhere?

Had anything happened last night?

She put down her untasted coffee and rose.

She could not be still in this state of anxiety and alarm.

She went from the table to the window and from the window back to the table restlessly, endeavoring to put aside her fears, but vainly.

Pushing back her hair from her forehead she tried to recall the events of the past night.

She remembered the angry eager voices in the little sitting-room, the quick, almost imperative words Stephen Daunt had spoken to her when he had mistaken her for Mrs. Rutledge, the beautiful frightened face which had been raised to his, and his long absence from the ball-room, Sibyl's early departure, and Frank's disappearance.

What was the meaning of it all?

Bah!

How foolish she was!

What could have happened?

No doubt Mrs. Rutledge had left early, in obedience to her husband's wishes, and Frank, finding the ball tedious after her departure had left also.

And Stephen was always to be beguiled away from the ball-room by the temptation of a cigar.

She was getting foolish and imaginative, nervous and fanciful.

She would eat her breakfast and start for Lindhurst, where a favorite schoolfellow, the daughter of the Rector, was looking forward to her visit, and the change would put her all right again.

She drank some coffee, and half mechanically helped herself to an egg.

There her breakfast ended, although she sat still at the table for a few minutes longer.

Then, once more rising hastily, she went over to the window, as if oppressed by some intolerable anxiety.

It had begun to snow again, although not heavily.

A horseman who was pulling in his horse just outside at the gate of the Gray House was lightly covered with the white feathery flakes.

He lifted his hat to Sidney and smiled, and the girl's heart almost ceased to beat in the sudden relief to her overpowering anxiety.

The next minute she had turned from the window and put her hand in Stephen Daunt's.

"Well, how are you?" he said cheerily. "I hardly expected to find you down after your dissipation."

"I am going to Lindhurst this morning," Sidney answered, raising her shining eyes to his face, which was calm and severe as usual, but very pale.

"Yes, so Doctor Arnold told me. I am the bearer of a note to you, Miss Sidney."

"Thank you," Sidney said slowly, taking it from him. "Are you going to the works, Stephen? Have you breakfasted?"

"Thank you, yes."

He sauntered across the room while she opened her note.

It contained only a few lines from her father.

"Do not wait to see me and so miss your train, dear Sidney," wrote the doctor. "I shall probably be detained for some time. Good-bye, little daughter; have a pleasant time, and bring me back some fresh roses."

"Stephen, where did you see papa?"

The question was hurriedly, almost abruptly asked.

Stephen turned suddenly from the window.

"A servant brought the note to Lambswold with a message to me asking me to bring it to you."

"Whose servant?"

"I really am not sure—perhaps one of Rutledge's people. I understand that Doctor Arnold was in the neighborhood."

Sidney said nothing.

Her face was grave and puzzled as she looked at the note.

She would have liked greatly to disobey; but Doctor Arnold, indulgent as he was, was strict in requiring obedience.

"I suppose I must go," she said wearily, after a little pause.

"I think it would be prudent, but not until you have had some breakfast. And I think, if you will give it to me, I will have a cup of coffee."

He took the coffee himself only to try to induce her to take something.

Sidney noticed, even in her abstraction, how kind and gentle he was, and how careful he was to see that she was well wrapped up.

"May I see you off?" he asked, as they went out to the carriage together.

"If you will be so kind. I don't suppose Frank will shoot you," she said, with a little laugh which had a touch of bitterness in it.

She was getting into the carriage as she spoke, so that Stephen's sudden start at her words escaped her.

She saw, though, as he sat down beside her, that he was still very pale.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

The Spectre Lover.

BY E. LINWOOD SMITH.

MARION, you could not betray me—you could not love any other man than me? Speak to me, darling. Tell me in words as true and tender as mine to you, that your heart is mine for ever, as my heart will be yours for ever and for ever."

It was a lover who spoke—an ardent and passionate, but doubtful lover.

He was a tall, pale, young man, strikingly handsome and distinguished in appearance.

His hair was like waving silk, so blonde and beautiful, that it might have given a character of effeminacy to a countenance less determined and characteristic.

His large blue eyes were so dark, and so heavily fringed with long, thick lashes that they seemed black.

The girl who stood before him, and who returned his steadfast, loving gaze with half-averted eyes and a smile that was half fond, half scornful, was the sort of woman who is often dangerous to men, always troublesome to herself.

She was a beauty and a coquette, and she was not wholly hardened or selfish.

She had just enough heart to make trouble for herself and others, and to make her play badly in many small games of the affections which she had previously arranged in her head with great accuracy.

When she had begun her flirtation with Robert Norton, Marion Swayne had not in the least meant to be serious herself.

She had intended all that sort of thing for her victim.

To her dismay she discovered that her own feelings were considerably entangled, and much more than they had ever been before.

The brilliant and fashionable Miss Swayne was absolutely in love with young Norton, a penniless man of letters, whose genius was yet to be proved, and whose path in literature was all uphill and heavy climbing.

Robert knew that she loved him, too—at least, as far as she was capable of loving him.

His passion did not blind him to the lack of true depth in her affection for him.

It was all the more hopeless, for he loved her profoundly in spite of all the faults he knew she possessed.

While addressing her in ardent and lover-like phrases, he held both her delicate little hands, and gazed down on her with a look that might have burned into her soul.

As a picture of exquisite entrancing beauty, she was worth gazing at.

Small and slight, but with the waving grace and lithe strength of a willow tree, Marion gave the observer an impression both of fragility and nervous power.

Her hair, brows, eyes and lashes were dark as midnight, but her complexion was of the creamy hue of the white camellia.

Her vivid scarlet lips told of high health exercise and animation.

"You don't speak to me, sweetheart," her lover continued, having waited some minutes for a response. "Cannot you say that you love me, Marion, truly as I love you."

"Don't be so tragic, Robert," was the playful answer, while her lips parted in a bewitching smile. "Just see how you have hurt my hands. They are absolutely red and bruised from your violence. You know well enough that I love you—more than I love anyone in the world—and can never love anyone else at all. Will that satisfy you?"

For answer, the impetuous lover covered the ill-treated little hands with kisses, gathered the child-like form in his arms, and held it close pressed to his heart.

"It must satisfy me, my darling—I suppose you could not love me as I do you—perhaps no woman could."

He added, with a sigh—

"It may be that I am unreasonable to ask it—women must be so different from men."

Marion looked up with a half laugh, and wished in her inmost heart that she could tell this man, who loved her so, that there were women in the world who could love even as he did, and that he would do well to seek such a one, and leave her to find a lover of her own stamp; her conscience, or what she called by that name, told her she should do so.

But she would not listen to the inward voice.

Robert's caresses and passionate outbursts of tenderness were dear to her; it gratified her vanity and touched her heart, such as it was, more than any incense of the same kind had ever done before.

She answered—

"I love you as I can, Robert, dear—for your sake, I wish I was capable of a greater love."

But Robert was satisfied—it was the most sincere and affectionate speech that Marion had ever made to him, and the luminous, joyful look in his eyes thanked her more eloquently than words.

"You have filled my heart with joy, dearest,—those kind words have given me courage to say that bitter word—Farewell! May all good angels guard you, Marion, till I hold you in these arms again. Do not fear for me, sweet one; with your love as my promised reward, I can attain to anything. You shall yet bear my name with true wifely pride. For your love I can dare all things, and win them, too; but without that to look forward to—I dare not think of that."

"And don't, dear Robert, for my love you will always have."

And for a moment Marion meant what she said, and really felt quite heroic.

Robert once more clasped her close to his heart with a vehemence that almost hurt her; but this time she did not complain, and a tearful mist dimmed her eyes when she found herself alone.

Marion read Robert's first letter with a warm glow at her heart, which she honestly mistook for the enthusiasm of first love, and she carried it about in her bosom for several days.

Under the effect of it she replied at once, and her answer was a very fair love-letter.

It remained for the rest of his life Robert's most precious earthly possession, and it was found close against his heart after he was dead.

Marion received Robert's frequent letters with less and less delight as they came more rapidly, with now and then a gentle reproach for her scanty replies, till at last she pooh-poohed them altogether, and ceased to answer them at all.

Rumors had reached Robert of an elderly wealthy marquis, who according to common report, was about to confer a title on the fair Marion, and bear her off to his ancestral home.

But Robert would not believe it.

He resolutely closed his heart against a doubt of her faithfulness to him.

"To doubt her," he said, "is to die;" and he accounted for his darling's silence by assuring himself that she was ill.

At last he could bear it no longer, and he resolved to see her.

It was a lovely day in early summer when Robert, on his way towards Miss Swayne's house, reached the pretty Gothic church where he had first seen her, her lovely eyes devoutly fixed on the minister in the pulpit.

He paused a moment, though his haste was great, to pay it the tribute of one loving look.

As he did so the church door opened, and a gay wedding party issued forth.

With a smile, and something like a half-murmured benediction, Robert stood aside and waited to see the bride.

And he did see her.

The light left his eyes, and the color fled from his cheeks—his soul seemed to die within him—for the bride in pearly robe of glistening satin, and veil that swept the ground behind her, was Marion—his Marion—the woman who had sworn to be his wife.

She leaned proudly on her husband's arm, a fine-looking old gentleman, the marquis, for whose title she would have bartered much more than her promise to Robert Norton.

For one instant, as she passed him, Marion glanced aside, and saw a face that seemed to have come from the grave—it was so still, so white, the look in the eyes so fixed and stony.

She shrank and shuddered, a stifled scream left her lips, but with a strong effort she controlled herself and laughed off her agitation.

Robert was lost in the crowd, and she could have believed that her imagination had played her the trick of conjuring him up there.

But Robert was avenged, although, perhaps, he never knew it.

Never did the fair young marchioness, whom he had known as Marion Swayne, close her eyes in sleep without seeing that white, despairing face that met her at the church door on her wedding-day.

Her sleep became a nightmare, and her waking hours were haunted by the ghastly visions of her sleep.

In vain her adoring husband took her abroad, in vain he lavished on her every gaiety and pleasure that money could procure.

Her heart was haunted by a spectre that could not be laid.

In despair the marquis at length brought his fair and fading young wife home to her own country, and to her girlhood's home; and this move seemed a happy one.

For Marion passed the first night in her old home in peace and quiet, and for the first time since her marriage her dreams were undisturbed by visions of her betrayed lover.

She hardly dared to hope it might continue so, but contrary to her expectations, contrary to her fears, each succeeding night proved as tranquil as the first.

Her health visibly improved.

The color and rounded smoothness of her cheek came back, and her old, radiant beauty shone both in face and figure.

The marquis began to hope that he might with safety bear her away again.

And although Marion somewhat dreaded the experiment, she thought she had overcome her nervous excitement sufficiently to venture on it.

The marquis had gone to London to attend to some necessary business arrangements, and she was expecting him home that same evening, as she suddenly remembered, while sitting in the moonlight indulging in dreams of future conquest.

Suddenly the door bell rang loud and long, waking her from her dreaming fancies with a start.

"Ah, that must be he," thought Marion, and then, "why doesn't one of the servants open the door?"

Nearly a minute passed, and she heard no sound of anyone in answer to the loud and peremptory summons of the bell.

She ran to the door, opened it, looked out in amazement, for no one was there; but a chill, cold air blew upon her, and she fancied that a shadow fell on her, and glided past her, along the hall, and into the apartment where she had been sitting.

She cried out—

"Who is there?"

And ran back into the room too frightened to think whether she was afraid.

There was no answer, but as she entered, she felt sure the same shadow fell across her, and then she was distinctly conscious of the figure of a man standing before her, directly between her and the window.

The same chill air seemed to blow upon her, and to freeze the marrow in her bones, but a horrible fear forced her to go close to the figure and to look up into its face.

It was Robert Norton—more pale, more shadowy than on that far-off day when she last saw him at the church door—but not Robert Norton alive and in the flesh; that she knew; for, looking straight at him, she saw through and at the further side of that shadowy figure the chairs, the little table, the window-curtains, even the street in the moonlight beyond.

Still staring into the cold, white face, she saw the pallid, frozen lips move and although no sound issued from them, she knew the words they formed—

"You are mine, Marion, and you must come with me."

Slowly the figure melted away into the air, and was gone.

Without cry or sigh, Marion fell as if struck with death, and when her husband and his servants entered, she still lay there, white, motionless, senseless.

The young marchioness never recovered—she only revived from one swoon to fall into another.

And when the new day dawned, its first rosy beams flushed a cold, dead face that could never flush again.

Marion was buried in the little graveyard of the pretty church where she was married.

A second funeral procession entered, at the same moment, by the opposite gate.

And the mourners said among each other—

"How strange! The funerals of Marion and Robert Norton in the same hour."

"Where will they be laid?"

"Side by side," replied another, who had seen the two new graves.

So the roses and the violets that grew above their ashes grew together, intermingled their blossoms, and dropped their leaves on those two graves: while those whom death alone had brought together mouldered into dust beneath.

STRONG MEN.—Many cases of extraordinary strength are reported among the ancients. The Roman tribune, Dometus, who went by the name of the second Achilles, is said to have killed at different times, three hundred of the enemy, and when treacherously set upon by twenty of his countrymen, although he was then past his sixtieth year, he killed fourteen of them before he was slain.

Pliny tells of one Athanatus, who walked across the stage at Rome, loaded with a breastplate weighing five hundred pounds, and with buskins of the same weight.

Another man named Milo, when he stood upright, could not be forced out of his place by any of the athletes. But of all the prodigies of strength of whom we have any account in Roman history, Maximin, the emperor, is to be reckoned the foremost.

Whatever we are told of him is well attested: his character was too exalted not to be thoroughly known; and that very strength for which he was celebrated at last procured him no less a reward than the empire of the world.

Maximin was above nine feet in height, and was the best proportioned man in the empire. He was by birth a Thracian, and, from being a simple herdsman, rose through the gradations of office, until he became Emperor of Rome.

The first opportunity he had of exerting his strength was in the presence of all the citizens in the theatre, where he overthrew twelve of the strongest men in wrestling, and outran two of the fleetest horses.

He could draw a loaded chariot which two of the strongest horses could not move. His appetite was prodigious. In war he was always foremost and invincible. Maximin was killed at last by his soldiers, whilst sleeping.

Another man, by distributing his weight about his body, so that every part bore its share, was able to raise a weight of two thousand pounds.

Bric-a-Brac.

SECOND MARRIAGE.—Among the early Greeks it was infamous for a woman to marry a second husband; so, that the name of the first widow who thus dared to brave public opinion and the unbroken custom of centuries, has come down to us in a somewhat tarnished honor.

PLENTY OF 'EM.—London *Truth* finds the following in *Scots' Magazine* of March, 1775: "There was lately presented to the empress of Russia a laboring man who has had two wives, the first of whom brought him four times four children at a birth, seven times three, and ten times two. The second wife once brought forth three children and the other six times two. The whole number of children by the two wives amounted to seventy-two.

THE LEGS OF GREAT MEN.—Cæsar had short legs. Napoleon was bow-legged. Lord Palmerston had caricature legs, and so did Disraeli. Alexander Pope was hump-backed and had a cripple's leg; so did Cowper. Plutarch tells that Alexander's left leg was badly out of plumb. Hannibal had notoriously big heels, and was knock-kneed. Cicero was very spindle-shanked, and Demosthenes is said to have had a shuffling, stumbling gait, which meant that his legs were not wholly in gear.

THE MISTAKE OF A LIFE.—A young man once picked up a sovereign lying in the road. Ever afterwards, as he walked along he kept his eyes steadily fixed on the ground, in the hope of finding another. And in the course of a long life he did pick up, at different times, a goodly amount of gold and silver. All these days, however, he saw not that heaven was bright above him, and nature was beautiful around. He never once lifted his eyes from the mud and filth in which he sought the treasure; and when he died, a rich old man, he only knew this fair earth of ours as a dirty road in which to pick up money as you walk along.

THE LANDLORD AND THE DOCTOR.—The late Dr. Coleman was once traveling in the wilds of Ohio, and, entering an hotel, called for dinner. He noticed upon sitting down at the table that there was a glass of whiskey beside his plate. On receiving his bill, he found the landlord charged him for the whiskey. "But," said the worthy doctor, "I have made no use of it, and never do." "It was there, and you could have had it. You must pay." "Very well," said the doctor. Some time afterwards the doctor was there again, and before eating he placed his medicine-case beside his plate. After eating, when paying his bill, he brought in charges for medicine. "But," said the host, "I have not had any." "Ah, but you could have had it; it was on the table!" said the doctor.

WHY HE MARRIED HER.—A gentleman once confided to an old friend, who asked him to tell him "all about his marriage," that the wife of his bosom had attained that enviable position simply by choosing at a supper-table blanc-mange instead of whipped cream. He paid the girl such marked attention on several occasions that he felt she was warranted in expecting him to ask her to marry him. He had no desire to have her for a wife, but he resolved, while dancing with her at a ball, that she should become the unconscious arbiter of her own fate—in fact, that he would toss with her in dishes instead of half-crowns. If she had said whipped cream, he would have withdrawn from her acquaintance with a peaceful conscience, and never thought of her again, except to congratulate himself on his escape.

A CANDID APOLOGY.—Returning from hunting one day, George III. entered affably into conversation with his wine-merchant, Mr. Carbonel, and rode with him side by side a considerable way. Lord Walsingham was in attendance, and watching an opportunity, took Mr. Carbonel aside and whispered something to him. "What's that—what's that Walsingham has been saying to you?" inquired the good-humored monarch. "I find, sir, I have been unintentionally guilty of disrespect. My lord informed me that I ought to have taken off my hat whenever I addressed your majesty; but your majesty will please to observe that whenever I hunt my hat is fastened to my wig, and my wig is fastened to my head, and I am on the back of a very high-spirited horse, so that if anything goes off we must all go off together!" The king laughed heartily at this apology.

MIRRORS.—Looking-glasses used to be made by covering the plate with an amalgam of tin and mercury; but this has been superseded by depositing a coat of real silver upon the glass, thrown down in a smooth film by adding oil of cloves or other organic substances to a solution of ammonia nitrate of silver, retained upon the plate by a raised rim of wax. The trouble with the process has been that, though cheaper, the plates are inferior in lustre, and lack the "black" color which silversmiths regard as indicating perfection of polish. The long looked for process of imparting the brilliancy of the mercurial coating to the cheap and durable film has at last been accomplished by chemical reaction. After the silver plating is complete the film is flooded with a weak aqueous solution of the double cyanide of mercury and potassium; slow decomposition takes place, and the mercury is precipitated, which immediately amalgamates with the silver film. The result is said to be thoroughly satisfactory, the amalgam of silver being quite as brilliant as that of tin, and less subject to change, while the new process has the advantage of being readily applicable to the largest plates, which by the old method could be treated only with great difficulty, if at all.

AT SUNSET.

BY SARAH DOUDNEY.

Three curlews, gray
As the blowing spray,
Flew low in the red of the dying day—
Flew shrieking far,
Where a purple bar
Of sunset prisoned the evening star.

The winds went by,
With a shrill sea cry,
'Twixt the red on the flood, and the red in the sky,
When my love and my sweet,
With her folded feet,
I laid where the wild waves clamor and beat.

On the desolate strand
Of a lonely land,
Her dead hands locked from my clinging hand,
Purple as wine,
In the sunset shine,
The salt spray gleamed on her face divine.

And I kissed her there,
On lips and hair,
While my soul cried out, in a fierce despair:
"Oh for the pain
Of the kisses vain
On lips that kiss not back again!"

I loosed the sail
Of a shallop pale,
That rocked with the rocking sea and gale,
And—a tender gr
On her fair, young .e—
She drifted away in the night's embrace—
Drifted away,
Through the shadow gray,
Far into the red of the dying day.

AT QUEEN'S CHACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE NEMESIS OF LOVE," "BARBARA GRAHAM," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER VII.—(CONTINUED).

His daughter!"

She came back again and again to the words—"his daughter."

The proud, noble statesman whom all England revered was her father.

Oh, if she could but have known it before!

If she had but had time to pour out the passionate love of her heart to him!

If there had but been time to tell how proud and happy she was, and how she valued her birthright, how she rejoiced in the knowledge that he was her father!

So many things were very clear to her now.

She had never understood his strange manner toward her, half love, half avoidance.

One thing after another unveiled itself, so that she almost wondered at last that she had not guessed the secret.

And she was Veronica Brandon, heiress of Queen's Chace.

She repeated the name over and over again to herself—"Veronica Brandon"—and each time she liked it better.

She was heiress of the grand mansion, of the fair domain, of the broad lands, of all the wonders of wealth she saw around her—she who had never known the luxury of having one shilling to spend!

It was no great wonder if her heart beat and every nerve thrilled with the sudden sense of power and wealth.

Henceforth she could do as she liked—she could make every one happy, she could lavish wealth on the things she loved best, she could do untold good.

She was roused from her reverie by the entrance of Lady Brandon.

Looking at her, Veronica realized what she had suffered—her face was quite white, with dark circles round the eyes.

She had wept almost incessantly since her husband's death, but now she seemed calm with the calmness of despair.

She closed the door, and, coming up to Veronica, took the girl's cold hands in her own and looked earnestly into her face.

"Veronica," she asked, "have you kept the secret?"

The young girl raised her head very proudly.

"Did you think that I should betray it?" she asked. "I am not a traitor, Lady Brandon."

"I know—I know; forgive me for speaking hastily.

"Veronica, I am almost mad. You cannot realise what I have to suffer—you cannot understand my position.

"I would rather—these are not wild words, but true ones—I would rather kill myself than that the world know how cruelly I have been deceived—that I had but the ashes of my husband's love, that he never cared for me, that his heart had been given to another before me.

"I could not bear it—I could not survive such a downfall to my pride, my attention, my standing and position in the world—I should not survive it."

"I am very sorry," said Veronica; "I cannot help it, Lady Brandon; it is not my fault, you know."

"Think, too, of Katherine, my beautiful child, brought up as her father's heiress. All her life she has deemed herself heiress of Queen's Chace—her future secure. Oh, Veronica, think what a blow it will prove for her!

"It will kill her!"

And the poor lady's lips quivered again.

"Then," she continued, "you do not know my people, the Valdorraines.

"They are the proudest people in England; they would—I dare not think what they will say or do when they hear my child is disinherited.

"I shall never look them in the face again.

"I wish that I had died before this day came."

"I am very grieved," said Veronica; "but I cannot help it."

"Poor Katherine—so happy in her future! They called her heiress of Queen's Chace when she lay in her cradle.

"My pretty child, it is not right, it is not just.

"I have done nothing to deserve it. All my life I was good and faithful to my husband.

"He has left me a legacy of sorrow and shame.

"Poor Katherine, how is she to bear it, Veronica?

"Will it make her hate him and dislike his memory?"

"No, she is too noble for that," said Veronica.

"Have you forgotten what he said to her on the evening before his death?"

"No. Oh, Veronica, my dear, I cannot tell her, I cannot indeed! She has been so light-hearted, so happy all her life.

"Until now she has never had any sorrow any care.

"How can I, her own mother, go to her and tell her that she and I are to be driven out, away from that which we have always held to our own?

"How can I go to her and say to her that she must lay down every hope, every brightness of her life, and suffer Heaven knows what?"

"You forget that she has Lord Wynleigh," said Veronica gently.

"I do not. I foresee fresh trouble there. He loves her, I know, but his friends are proud.

"They would oppose his marriage to a disinherited girl.

"She would in all probability lose her love with her fortune.

"Oh, Veronica, I cannot bear it!"

She drew nearer to her.

"You love her, Veronica. I know you do.

"You have said so a hundred times. You said—see, I remember the words—you would give your life for her if she needed it, because she was the first to love you. You said that you would stand between her and every sorrow, that an arrow meant for her heart should first of all pierce yours. You said that, Veronica."

"Yes, and I meant it," she acknowledged.

Lady Brandon drew still nearer to her. It seemed to Veronica that the breath came in hot gasps from her lips.

"She does not want your life, Veronica; to give it would not serve her.

"Will you serve her as you said you would?

"Will you let the arrow meant for her heart wound yours?"

"Yes," said Veronica; "you know I will."

"Will you save her youth, her love, her hope?

"Will you keep her life bright and unclouded?

"Will you keep her happy, as she has been? Will you serve her loyally, faithfully, as you have said?"

"Yes," she answered again; and Lady Brandon drew the girl's face down to her own.

"You will do all this? Then, Veronica, burn the will—burn it, and keep the secret until you die."

Veronica drew back pale and trembling.

"Burn the will!" she repeated faintly. "You cannot mean that? How can I? I dare not."

She was bewildered.

No such idea had occurred to her.

"Burn the will!" she said again.

"Oh, Lady Brandon, how can I"

"You can do it easily enough if you wish—if you will!" declared Lady Brandon. "Who knows of it except you and me? No one. Who knows the secret save you and me? No one.

"Oh, Veronica, if you would be true to your promise, true to your word, burn the will and forget it!"

"But that would be to disobey the wishes of the dead," said Veronica.

"It seems to me I am not my own mistress.

"My—my father's commands, his wishes—surely I must obey them; surely I must carry out all his plans?"

Lady Brandon stood before her erect, her face eloquent with the passion of her words.

"Veronica, make no scruples, raise no doubts.

"Are you capable of this great sacrifice for Katherine's sake, for her lover's sake? It is much to ask, I know.

"Have you the generosity, the nobility, the grandeur of soul to make it?

"You said you would die for her, my fair-haired darling. Would you give life, yet withhold this?"

"I am bewildered," replied Veronica. "I do not know how to answer you."

"Come with me," said Lady Brandon. "Step lightly, Veronica, my darling is asleep. Come with me."

And the two ladies passed out of Veronica's pretty room together.

Lady Brandon led the way to Katherine's room.

She opened the door gently and they entered together.

Katherine had exhausted herself with weeping.

Her father's death was the first trouble of her life, the first cloud that had ever darkened her sky, the first sorrow that had brought burning tears to her eyes.

She had exhausted herself with weeping, and then she had thrown herself on to the pretty white bed and was sleeping the sleep of utter weariness.

Her golden hair lay in picturesque disorder over the pillows, one white rounded arm was thrown above her head—even in profound slumber her lips quivered and deep sobs came from them.

She was too exhausted for any sound to reach her now.

Lady Brandon took Veronica's hand and led her to the bedside.

"Look," she said—"Veronica, see how young and how fair she is; see how innocent and helpless.

"Think how she has been loved and cherished.

"Do not throw her on the mercies of a cold world.

"Think of her life; do not blight it. Think of her love; do not take it from her.

"Veronica, if above this tender white breast you saw a sword hanging, you would not let it fall.

"If you saw a hand clutching a dagger and pointing it at that tender heart, you would thrust it aside.

"Look at her, Veronica, so unconscious of this tragedy.

"Will you wake her to tell her that you are going to take her inheritance, her fortune, her happiness—ah, even her love from her?"

Veronica turned away with a shudder.

"Come with me again," said Lady Brandon—and this time she led the way to the room where the dead statesman lay.

She closed the door, and, holding Veronica's hand tightly clasped in her own, she led her to his side.

"I have brought you into the solemn presence of the dead.

"He who lies there called this sin of his a gilded sin.

"Veronica, he did not foresee, he could not know, the suffering and the sorrow that would fall upon us.

"Oh, Veronica, is it just? Have I deserved it?

"Is it honorable that we should so suddenly be deprived of our own—our position, our inheritance, all that life holds most dear?

"Did you love him, Veronica, this dear dead father?"

"Yes," she replied.

It seemed to Veronica that all power of speech had left her—that she could not utter the words that rose to her lips.

"You did love him; then spare him. You could do nothing so hurtful to his memory as to let this secret be known.

"All England reveres him now, all England does homage to him.

"He is numbered amongst the great ones of the nation.

"Oh, Veronica, how they would denounce him, those who have loved him best, if they knew that in very truth he had left his wife and child to bear the brunt and the burden of his concealment!

"They would blame where they have praised.

"You will take a hero from his pedestal. You will shadow a grand memory, detract from a fair fame, if you tell his secret. And you will gain—what?

"A fortune that you will never enjoy, an inheritance that will prove more of a curse than a blessing, an inheritance that will be almost a fraud. Veronica, burn that cruel will."

"But others must know of it," she said.

"No," asserted Lady Brandon, "the lawyer who drew up that will is dead—dead, I tell you.

"I remember that Sir Jasper went to a strange lawyer whose name was Mathews, and that some days afterward he said that a strange thing had happened.

"He had asked Mathews to attend to some little business for him, and a few days afterward he had died suddenly.

"I remember it so well. One never misses much what one has never had, Veronica.

"You have never been considered or treated as the heiress of Queen's Chace. You would not miss the distinction. But Katherine has.

"Katherine has grown up with the thought; it has formed part of her life. My dear, I plead to you, I pray to you—burn that will.

"For Katherine's sake, by your love for her, by your promise to shield her, for your dead father's sake, to save his name from rude comment, to shield his memory from all stain of reproach, I, your father's widow—I, Katherine's mother—kneel to you—I beg of you to grant what I ask!"—and Lady Brandon knelt before Veronica with outstretched hands.

Veronica rose, sublime in her emotion; a light that did not seem to be of this world shone on her face.

"For your dead father's sake, Veronica!" sobbed Lady Brandon.

"I will do it," she replied. "I will burn the will, and I will keep the secret until I die—and in death I will keep it still."

Lady Brandon rose and drew the girl to her father's side.

"Swear it here," she said; "lay your hands on his breast—above his heart here.

"Now swear to me that you will never take Katherine's inheritance from her—that you will never lay claim to it—that you will never betray the secret of your birth and parentage."

Veronica swore it.

"Kiss his lips," cried Lady Brandon; "they would open to bless if they only could."

Veronica kissed his lips.

"It will lie between us, father," she said, "this secret of ours."

Then she started up in alarm.

The struggle had been too much for Lady Brandon—she had fallen to the ground.

The servants who came to her help thought she was ill from grief.

They bore her with pitying words to her chamber, while Veronica went back to her room like one moving in a trance.

Not for long had she been heiress of Queen's Chace—not for long had she called herself Veronica Brandon, Sir Jasper's daughter.

All the nobler, higher, better part of her nature had been roused by Lady Brandon's passionate appeal.

She forgot in her enthusiasm all that the sacrifice would cost her.

She remembered only that she was securing Katherine's happiness and saving her father's fair name.

She sat quite still and silent, while the birds sang outside her window, and the sunlight brightened the whole glad world—how many hours she never knew.

She reflected that her golden dream was over, that she would be Veronica di Cynthe now until she died.

Then she roused herself.

The will must be burned before she saw Lady Brandon again.

She would not read it.

That would simply renew her pain, and could not benefit her.

She must destroy it at once.

She went to the box in which she had put it away, and took it out.

She read, "The last will and testament of Sir Jasper Brandon, Baron of Hurstwood, etc."

She kissed the name, and her tears fell on it.

How could she destroy it?

Curiously, instead of being written on paper, it was written on thick parchment that she could neither tear nor cut.

On this June day there was no fire anywhere.

She could not go down to the servants' offices to burn it there, for she would be noticed, and harm might come of it.

The only way was to have a fire made in her sitting-room, and burn it there.

The bell was answered by Clara Morton, a pretty girl whom Sir Jasper had advised her to take as her maid.

She carefully placed the will out of sight and then, when the maid entered, she asked her to light a fire in her room.

"A fire," repeated Clara Morton—"a fire here, miss?"

"Yes," said Veronica.

"But," objected the girl, "it is so warm—it is quite a hot day, miss.

"I am afraid the heat will be too much for you."

"There is no warmth here," said Veronica.

And the maid, seeing the shudder that made her young mistress's graceful figure tremble, thought perhaps she was really cold.

Still it was a strange thing to ask for on a June day.

And more than once, as Clara Morton lighted the fire, she said to herself that it was unnatural, and that there must be some reason for it.

Still she obeyed.

But the fire would not light.

Three or four times it went out, and each time Veronica had to ring again.

"How bent she is on it?" said the girl to herself.

"What can she want a fire for? There is something mysterious about it."

At last the fire burned brightly.

Then Veronica fastened the door and took out the will.

She held it in her hands, looked first at the parchment roll and then at the bright flames.

It seemed to her as though she held something living.

Wealth, honor, fortune, position, the honor of a noble name—these would all perish with the document when she laid it on the flames.

Could she destroy it?

Was it not like taking the life of some living thing?

"I will do it," she said, "not by halves, but generously.

"I make this sacrifice, and Heaven sees me.

"I make it to secure my sister's happiness and to save my father's memory.

"I make it with all my heart in return for their love for me, and I shall never regret it."

Then she parted the coals and placed the parchment between them.

In a few moments there was a thick smoke, and, seeing no more of the parchment, she thought it was destroyed.

She watched the thick smoke as it rose.

What did it bear with it of hers?

There was some one at the door—who could it be?

She cried out, "Who is it?" And Clara Morton answered—

"I want you very particularly, if you please, Miss di Cynthe."

Veronica opened the door, and the girl looked wonderingly into her face.

"I have brought you a cup of tea, miss," she said; "I thought you wanted something."

Her quick eyes noted the heavy smoke in the fire-place.

She withdrew without a word.

In a few moments she was back again. "Miss di Cynthe," she cried, "I wish you would come to my lady's room. I have knocked at the door several times and can get no answer. I am afraid there's something wrong."

And Veronica hastened away, not notic-

ing that she had left the girl in the room behind her.

CHAPTER VIII.

"WHAT could you mean, Clara?" said Veronica, when some ten minutes afterward, she returned to her room. "Lady Brandon was not even asleep, and she says that you have never even touched the door."

"Is it all right, miss?" asked the girl, as though she were in a state of breathless suspense.

"Right? Yes. Lady Brandon never even heard you," said Veronica.

Clara answered that her ladyship must have been asleep, but did not like to say so.

Veronica noticed that the girl's face was flushed and her manner strange.

But she did not think much of it at the time.

Presently Clara quitted the room, after saying a great deal more about the fright and relating an anecdote of a lady whom she knew who had been found dead of grief soon after her husband's death.

Then Veronica wondered just a little that she should talk so much.

As a rule the girl was respectful and docile.

Left alone again, Veronica would not think of what she had done.

That was all forgotten—all past.

She was Veronica di Cyntha—had never been anything else.

She looked into the smouldering fire—the last vestige of the parchment had disappeared.

The papers she had kept.

They could not hurt, and she felt that she would like to look at them from time to time.

She went back to Lady Brandon's room, and clasped her arms round her.

"I have burned it," she said—"it is all destroyed; and I have come to mention it for the last time—to tell you that you may trust me as you would yourself."

Lady Brandon fell weeping on her neck, telling her that she was blessed, thrice blessed, for that she had saved herself and her child from what was far worse than the bitterness even of death.

"You may intrust your future to me, Veronica," said Lady Brandon. "I have two thousand a year of my own, and I will settle the half of it on you."

So the matter was never mentioned again by Veronica or her father's widow.

The next day they buried him, and the place knew him no more.

All England mourned for the dead statesman, and never wearied of praising him, whilst the mantle of his greatness fell upon Lord Wynleigh.

* * * * *

A year had passed since the death of Sir Jasper.

Lady Brandon had spent it at Queen's Chace.

Some had advised her to go away, to take her daughter abroad.

But the Chace seemed to have an attraction for her.

When the year that she had given to seclusion had passed, their first visitor was Lord Wynleigh.

They were delighted to see him.

It was such a bright, cheerful change. Lord Wynleigh was growing anxious now about the time of his probation. He made Veronica his confidante.

"I know that I can trust you," he said, "because you love Kate so dearly. I have worked hard this year and a half.

"I have made a position. I have laid the foundation of future fame and fortune. I grant that I have made no money; but that does not matter—Kate and I understand each other so well.

"She knows that if she had not one shilling in the world I should love her just the same—more, if possible; but we should have to wait for years.

"As it is, I do not see why we should not be married at Christmas. Do you, Veronica?"

How she thanked Heaven in her heart that she had done as she had—that she had sacrificed herself!

If she had kept her inheritance, then Katherine could not have been married. Lord Wynleigh wondered at the light that came into the girl's beautiful face.

How little Veronica dreamed at that moment of all that would come to pass before Christmas time!

There had not been the least difficulty in the settlement of Sir Jasper's affairs.

The will that he had made when Katherine Brandon was an infant was still in the hands of the family solicitor—everything was perfectly straightforward.

Lady Brandon explained that she understood Miss di Cyntha's affairs, and should continue to act as her guardian.

She had loyally kept her word, and had settled one thousand a year upon Veronica.

She showed her gratitude to her in a hundred other ways.

She was most kind to her.

But the one object was never mentioned between them again.

Sir Jasper's fair-haired daughter had become Baroness of Hurstwood.

She was called Lady Katherine at home, and the bright days passed with naught save pleasant hours.

One beautiful August evening, when the red glow of the western sun set filled the sky, Veronica stood under the shade of the tall lime-tree watching the evening light.

A happiness had come to her, so great, so sudden, so entrancing, that she was dazed by it.

For Sir Marc Caryll had asked her to become his wife.

She did not know until then all that slept in her heart—the love, the passion, the tenderness—and the waking had startled her.

She was lost in wonder at herself.

The crown and the glory of her womanhood had come to her.

She rejoiced in the new and perfect happiness.

She opened her whole heart to it.

It was such chivalrous wooing, and he loved her so dearly.

No one could ever have been so dearly loved before.

She stood there thinking of it, with a smile of perfect content on her face, and as she did so Sir Marc came to her.

"I have been watching you, Veronica," he said, "until I have grown jealous of the sky and the foliage, and everything else that your beautiful eyes have rested on. What have you been thinking of?"

"Of nothing in the wide world but you," she replied.

"Of me, sweetheart!" he exclaimed joyfully; and then he told her what he had come to ask—when would she be his wife.

"You are too kind ever to be cruel, darling," he said, looking at the beautiful flushed face.

"I told you long ago how lonely my home is.

"I want 'the angel in the house'—I want you there.

"You cannot tell how dreary it all seems to me. Veronica, when will you come to me?"

"Not yet," she replied shyly—"it cannot be yet."

"Why not?" he asked.

"You have only just found out you loved me."

"Nay, Veronica," he said, smiling, "I found that out long since.

"I was coming last July to tell you so, but poor Sir Jasper had just died."

She turned her face away lest he should see the quiver of pain on it.

"Sir Marc," she said, gently, "you have never asked me any questions about my family, or my home in Venice, or my fortune."

"Lady Brandon has explained," he replied.

"Your father was a great friend of Sir Jasper's, she tells me."

Veronica made no reply.

She could not tell him the truth, but she would speak no false word to him—never one.

He continued—

"I care nothing about your fortune, sweetheart.

"I am a rich man—so rich that I am troubled at times to know how to spend my money.

"I lay it all at your feet. You are mistress of everything that belongs to me. When will you come to me, my Veronica? You have nothing to wait for. Do not be unkind and send me away!"

She made no answer.

In her heart she wished to be with him, but the very consciousness of it prevented her from speaking.

"This is July," he said; "shall we say September, Veronica?"

She agreed, and Sir Marc was so determined to keep her to her word that he went at once in search of Lady Brandon and told her.

He brought her back with him to where Veronica still stood under the limes.

"I leave my interests in your hands, Lady Brandon," he said.

"I shall return, with your permission, to marry Veronica on the twentieth of September. You will promise that she shall be ready?"

Lady Brandon promised.

"I do not think that I can live away from her altogether until then, Lady Brandon. Will you invite me to come down in August?"

"Come whenever you will, Sir Marc," said Lady Brandon.

He pressed the hand of his love.

"I have bound you, sweetheart," he said—"you can never free yourself again."

And, looking at his handsome face, his eyes lit with love, she said to herself that separation from him would be death.

CHAPTER IX.

AUGUST had come with its ripe, rich beauty, the fruit hung in the orchards, the gardens were a blaze of color, the barley and the corn were ready for the reapers.

Sir Marc had come down again to the Chace.

Those who had seen Veronica when she first reached England would hardly have recognized her had they seen her now.

The beautiful face had changed so completely.

The pale, passionate lovelinness had deepened into something more lovely still; there was more color, more brightness.

The dark love-lit eyes had in them the radiance of full and perfect content. Love had beautified her, even as it had beautified her life.

On this August morning she was in her pretty boudoir alone—alone, for Sir Marc had gone in search of something to please her.

He lived only to make her happy.

She stood in the midst of a hundred beautiful things.

Lady Brandon had determined to present her with her trousseau, and a large chest arrived that morning from Paris.

Veronica looked at her magnificent gift.

It did not strike her as it would have done at another time.

She could think only of her happiness and her love.

She was smiling to herself, wondering whether a girl was ever so blessed, so happy, when some one rapped gently at her door.

She looked up in surprise when her maid Clara Morton, entered the room.

"I want to speak to you, Miss di Cyntha, if you can spare time," she said.

Veronica made some courteous answer, and felt even more surprised when the girl closed the door and fastened the lock.

The large long window that led to the terrace was open—neither of them thought of it.

"Why do you do that, Morton?" asked Veronica.

"Because I have that to say to you which must be said without interruption."

Veronica looked up with haughty displeasure.

"You behave very strangely," she said; "I do not like it."

She looked fixedly at the girl, whose face was not pleasant to see, there was a livid light in her eyes, an air of cringing, yet of defiance, in her whole manner.

"You must listen to me, Miss di Cyntha," she said.

"I hold a secret of yours, and I must be paid for it."

"You can have no secret of mine," returned Veronica.

"But I have," said the girl. "Listen to me. I am engaged to marry John Palding, who once lived here as head groom. We have been engaged to be married for eight years, and fortune has never once smiled on us.

"He saved three hundred pounds and put it into a bank.

"The bank broke, and he was left penniless.

"I saved sixty pounds, and invested it in a building society, which became bankrupt. Fortune has never once smiled on us until now.

"Now John Palding has an offer from a farmer in Australia.

"If he can go out there, and take five hundred pounds with him, we shall make our fortune."

"I do not see what this has to do with me," interposed Veronica.

"I do, Miss di Cyntha. I hold a secret of yours, and I want five hundred pounds as the price of my silence."

"You are talking nonsense, Morton. I only can imagine that you have lost your senses."

"You will find, on the contrary, Miss di Cyntha, that I was never more sensible in my life. Let me tell you what I have to say."

Veronica looked at her.

In the excitement of the interview she had risen and confronted her.

"Come to the point at once, please," said Veronica. "What have you to say?"

The girl looked uneasily at her mistress; the color came and went in her face; her eyes drooped.

Raising her head, she said very suddenly—

"It is for John's sake—I would do anything for John."

Veronica gave a sigh of resignation.

What this strange scene meant she could not tell, but it would end at some time no doubt.

Morton heard the sigh.

"You are impatient, miss," said she. "I am coming to the matter.

"I do not like to speak of it to you, you have been a kind mistress to me. But it is for John's sake—I would do anything for him."

"Will you be kind enough to just come to the point?" said Veronica.

"I will," answered Clara.

Yet Veronica saw that she had to summon all her courage, to make a most desperate effort.

She looked up at her.

"You remember Sir Jasper's death, Miss di Cyntha?

"You remember the day after it? Though it was a warm June day, you would have a fire in your room."

Veronica started.

Her face grew white, a low cry came from her lips.

"Go on," she said to the girl, who had paused abruptly when she saw the change in her mistress's face.

"That very day, miss, I thought there was something wrong," she said.

"Why should you want a fire when the June sun was shining so warmly? I said to myself that you had something to burn."

Another low cry came from Veronica. Morton continued:

"I—you will be very angry with me, Miss di Cyntha—I watched you; I knelt down and looked through the keyhole.

"The key was in the lock, so that I could not see much, but I saw distinctly a roll of parchment in your hands, and I saw you put it on the fire.

"I saw it begin to burn, and I was wild to know what it was.

"All at once I had an idea that you were destroying something that belonged to Sir Jasper, and was determined to know."

She paused, while the beautiful face gazing into hers grew deadly white.

"I invented an excuse to get you from the room, Miss di Cyntha," she continued.

"I told you that Lady Brandon had not answered a knock at her door—it was simply an excuse to get you from your room.

"Then I took from the fire the charred remains of the parchment.

"I saw quite distinctly the words 'Last will and testament of Sir Jasper Brandon,' Miss di Cyntha.

"It was but a charred fragment—I took it away with me and now, Miss di Cyntha, I accuse you of having burned Sir Jasper's will. You cannot deny it—I have the proofs."

Veronica stood like one turned to stone. She had lost all power of speech. The girl continued:

"I can form no idea why you did it—that does not concern me—perhaps it was for your own interest.

"They said in the servants' hall that Sir Jasper had left you money; perhaps the will you destroyed took it from you."

There was a flash as of fire from the dark eyes.

"I do not wish to do you any harm, miss.

"I have not mentioned what I saw to any one, and I never will; but you must give me five hundred pounds for keeping your secret.

"Give me that, and I will promise, I will swear, that no allusion to what I have seen shall ever pass my lips.

"Give me that and I will bring the charred fragment to you.

"I do not wish to harm you, but Providence has given me this chance and I must make the most of it.

"From that one moment I said to myself that I would keep your secret until I could use it.

"Give me five hundred pounds, and I will be as faithful as death to you.

Then the power of speech came to Veronica.

"Even if I would condescend to bribe you," she said, "I could not; I have not five hundred pounds of my own in the world."

"You have a rich lover," returned the girl, with a significant smile. "Sir Marc would give you anything in the world, his heart's blood if you needed it."

"Hush!" said Veronica, sternly. "I will not allow you to say such words."

"You may do what you like, miss—I shall keep to my word.

"If you give me five hundred pounds, I will never reveal your secret; if not, I will betray it."

"What if I refuse?" said Veronica "Tell me the worst."

In her heart she knew the worst must come.

It was as impossible for her to find five hundred pounds as it would have been to find five thousand.

"The worst is, that if I fail to get the money from you, I must try to find out who is the next most interested in the matter.

"There is one thing that you cannot deny Miss di Cyntha, you burned the will." She paused with a sudden cry.

Unperceived by either, Sir Marc had entered through the open window, and stood with a horror stricken face, listening to the last few terrible words.

With an air of terrible bewilderment he looked from one to the other.

Veronica was white as death, the servant girl insolent in the full triumph of her accusation, in the knowledge of her victory.

Veronica looked round when she saw the sudden dawn of fear in the girl's bright eyes.

She uttered no cry when she saw her lover, but a cold terrible shudder seized her.

He came to her and took her soft white hand.

"What is the matter, Veronica? What does this insolent woman say? Why do you allow her to insult you?"

"Truth is no insult, Sir Marc," put in Morton.

"Say the word, and I will send for a policeman, and will give her into custody. I heard a little of what has passed, and I see she is trying to extort money from you—why not order her from the house?"

"Ah, why not?" cried Morton insolently. "As you say, Sir Marc, why not?"

"I take the duty upon myself," he said. "I order you not only to quit the room, but to quit the house.

"Lady Brandon will approve of what I have done when she hears of your conduct."

"I shall not leave the room, Sir Marc," she replied quietly, "until I have Miss di Cyntha's answer. She knows what I want; let her say if she will give it to me."

"You know that I cannot," she answered.

Sir Marc looked at her in bewilderment.

"Surely you are not willing to compromise with this woman, Veronica? She must be punished, any attempt to extort money is a crime that the law punishes very severely.

"Do not speak to her—leave her to me."

Then he paused in bewildered wonder.

There was something he did not understand—a shrinking fear in Veronica's face and an insolent triumph in the maid's.

Where was the indignation, the just anger, that she should feel?

What could it mean?

With a restless, uneasy gaze he looked from one to the other.

The dark eyes of the woman he loved had never met his own.

"I heard what passed," he said. "I was bringing you those Gloire de Dijon roses, Veronica, and I heard this insolent woman say that you had burned a will—that you could not deny it.

"I know the meaning of that. She brings this false accusation against you, meaning to extort money from you, and you very properly refuse to give it to her. She ought to be sent to prison."

"Stop, Sir Marc," said the woman angrily

—"you speak too fast. Ask my mistress whether my charge against her is false or not."

"I will not insult Miss di Cynthia by any such question," he replied.

"Then you are unjust," she said. "You accuse me of bringing a false charge; ask Miss di Cynthia whether that charge is true or false, she will not deny it if you ask her."

Still there came no words from the white lips that were closed so strangely.

"I refuse to do any such thing," he returned.

"Again, Sir Marc, I say that you are unjust.

"I accuse Miss di Cynthia of having in her own room, unknown to every one, and, as she thought unseen by every one, wilfully burned Sir Jasper Brandon's last will and testament.

"More than that, I can prove that she did so. Now, Sir Marc, look from her to me—which of us looks guilty?"

He looked at Veronica as though half expecting an indignant denial.

None came.

"Miss di Cynthia," she continued "tell Sir Marc, who accuses me of bringing a false charge, whether you destroyed that will or not."

Still there was no answer.

"I swear to Heaven that I saw her do it, and that I have the proofs," cried the maid. "I should not speak so plainly before you, Sir Marc, but that hush-money will do from you as well as from her."

Then Veronica spoke.

She went up to him, and without looking at him, she said—

"Will you send that woman away, Marc? I shall die if she remains here. I will speak to you when she is gone."

It struck him with a pang more bitter than death that she had never once denied the charge.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

The Blue Chamber.

BY EDMUND DOWNEY.

TWO pretty women sat talking by firelight one autumn evening.

A tea-table, splendid with old Crown Derby, and a satin cosy embroidered to match cocked on the top of the old silver teapot, stood between them, and the third volume of the last popular novel lay on the wolf-skin rug just where Lynette had dropped it, when even her bright eyes could read no longer.

She was a slim, fair-faced girl, with outlines a thought too sharp for prettiness, alert and sensitive to the finger-tips.

Her keen, bright face took a dozen varying shades of expression while she spoke as many words.

Her hair waved crisply, her eyes were grey, dilating and deepening with the intensity of her meaning.

She was kneeling on the rug tormenting the big burning log in the grate with a toy brass poker, and watching the blue flames and red sparks come and go while she talked.

Her sister listened behind her peacock fan, calmly and reasonably, as was her wont.

"No marriage can ever be happy," declared Lynette, in her thin, musical, childish voice, "without perfect love and trust."

"I think I have heard something like that before," remarked Mrs. Featherstone, in her full contralto.

"Besides, I never disputed the statement, did I?"

"Why, Lola! Didn't you say that a wife had a right to a man's present and future, but his past was his own?"

"Something of the kind," Lola admitted. "I also said that it was a queer way of displaying your perfect trust in a man to insist on knowing all his secrets."

"Trust me not at all, or all in all!" quoted Lynette, emphatically.

"And a nice position Merlin got into by acting on the advice," commented Lola.

Lynette shrugged her shoulders, and gave the log a furious blow, sending sparks in showers about.

Lola meditatively stroked the soft plush of her tea-gown with her dimpled, white hand, glancing approvingly at the sparkle of the gems that encrusted it, and then spoke with authority from the depths of her basket chair.

"My dear child, it was a wise woman who said, 'Never insist on being your husband's first love; be content if you are sure of being his last.'"

"I would never set eyes on John again if I were not perfectly certain of being the one and the other!" Lynette replied, her color rising, and her eyes darkening.

"Our lives are to be one, with one opinion, one ideal, one set of tastes and feelings——"

"Whose? Yours or his? And how about yachting?" interposed Mrs. Featherstone.

"Lola! When you know I have ordered three yachting suits for my trousseau—a blue, and a white, and a Galatea! Of course I shall try to go with him.

"I can but be wretched; but if he's pleased it's all right."

"You are a good little thing, Lynette," said her sister, affectionately; "but you see agreement on every point is physically impossible.

"I wish you would admit the principle in all things.

"It will save a world of disappointment and dispersed illusions."

Lynette's eyes grew dewy, and her lip quivered.

"Let me keep my illusions while I can, then.

"You and Mark may have your views of married happiness.

"John and I would rather come to grief in striving after a high ideal than sneak through life contented with having realized a low one."

Lola was silent.

She had never consciously formed any ideal, and wouldn't have distressed herself by striving after it if she had, on any consideration.

She had a beautiful, well-ordered home; a pretty little year-old baby son; a kind, considerate husband; and was the handsomest woman in the county.

How could her life be possibly improved on?

"I beg your pardon, Lola!" broke out Lynette, impulsively.

"I didn't mean—that is, I didn't think—I oughtn't to have said so to you. What a blundering, egotistical wretch I am!"

Lola's great brown eyes opened wide in utter bewilderment; then, following Lynette's glance across the room, became enlightened and half-closed their curly fringed lids in perfect indifference.

A half length portrait hung on the wall facing the fire.

A portrait of a pretty woman, of a certain order of prettiness, the sort that curiously enough is never admitted by other women, however attractive men may find it.

Ruddy brown hair, coiled high upon the head, after the fashion of some ten years ago, and rippling across a low white forehead; long eyes of a bright blue, with half-closed, heavy white eyelids; a small mouth, with full, red lips, and a soft round chin with a dimple like a baby's.

"Did you think I should be sensitive about Mark's first wife?" Lola asked, amusedly.

"I had forgotten that she ever existed, for the moment."

Lynette frowned incredulously.

"I should hate the sight of her. Why do you keep that portrait there, Lola?"

"Because I am so much better looking, my dear—better in every way, and it serves to remind Mark of the fact.

"I like to keep her there in perpetual comparison with me—to her disadvantage."

Lola sat upright and spoke quite animatedly—for her.

"When Mark and I first came home here, he asked me to re-arrange everything as I wished, and I saw him glance at the portrait.

"I knew what he meant, and said directly that I should prefer to leave Lady Mildred there.

"It would stop unkind tongues, I said, if that was still kept in the place of honor. Mark thought I was an angel, of course, and agreed.

"If I fancied he still loved her I would burn it this minute; but as he detests her memory as cordially as I can wish—keep your place, Lady Mildred!"

And Lola waved a salute that was half a menace to her pictured rival, and laughed a low, little laugh; then, sinking back with her usual lazy grace, demanded, "Some more tea; not quite so sweet, please, dear."

Lynette was quite accustomed to her sister's sudden outbursts—of passion, mirth, or devotion, as the case might be, and poured the tea out carefully, with her ears on the alert the while to distinguish and identify a confused sound of voices and horses' feet without.

A ring at the bell—an opening door—a heavy foot, followed by a light one, on the stairs, and the portiere raised and admitted big, burly Mark Featherstone, followed by a tall, dark, bright-eyed youth, John Langdon Orme.

Mark bent over his wife in her downy basket nest.

Lynette sprang forward into the embrace of two rough, blue pilot-coated arms, and pretty Lady Mildred looked down on them all from her canvas with her languishing blue eyes, a world of cynical meaning in the eternal simper of her painted lips.

* * * * *

Mr. and Mrs. Langdon Orme were at home.

The flag floating from the deep of Ormescliffe Castle proclaimed the fact to a gratified county.

During John's long minority the place had been let to an unpopular, disreputable family, whose departure was viewed with much content, giving place, as they did, to a bright, genial young couple, with light hearts, and a pocketful of money to spend between them.

They soon hit on a very promising way of ridding themselves of a portion of their burden of riches.

Ormescliffe Castle was a wonderful and imposing structure, once a stronghold of some importance; then a priory, and lastly the residence of a fine old English gentleman with a taste for classic architecture and Italian gardens.

There was a magnificent opening for artistic restoration, the only difficulty being where to begin.

By way of a practical commencement, they had turned an eminent London architect (Murgatroyd, R.A., a recognised authority on mediæval art) loose in the great banqueting hall—a sort of apartment suited for a coronation or an agricultural show, hardly for the daily needs of an English gentleman's household.

"I'm afraid it will take all our lives and all our money before it can be finished," John admitted.

"In fact Lynette thinks we had better stop and begin with the rooms we really want at once.

"Lynette is always so practical and prudent."

Lola was accustomed to being the recipient of similar remarks from one or the other of the devoted young couple, so she merely signified assent, and he set off again.

"She looked so handsome, too, last night, didn't she?

"Not a woman to compare with her. Old Lord Bilberry said so.

"The best dancer, and out-and-out the prettiest woman.

"I heard him, I beg your pardon, Lola, of course you were there; but you know Lynette is younger, and—and——"

John's sentence trailed off lamely; but Lola was no whit discomfited.

"Lord Bilberry is an old noodle, and as blind as you are, John.

"Lady Muriel Banks and I are both better looking than Lynette, and I was immeasurably the best dressed of the three. It would have been a want of proper feeling on your part to have noticed it, though."

John looked unconvinced.

He went on:

"I came to ask you a great favor. I am obliged to go up to town to-day.

"A man has a schooner yacht to sell, and perhaps Lynette may like it better than the Precious.

"Won't you go to Ormescliffe, and keep her company?

"I wanted her to come here, but she wouldn't, and I can't bear to think of her all alone up there."

"Very well," agreed Mrs. Featherstone; "but when am I to go, and how long am I to stay?"

"I haven't told her, lest she should build upon it and be disappointed; but I mean to try and get back to dinner.

"Don't tell her so, for I might not manage it.

"If not, I'll come by the early train to-morrow."

Lola's eyes glanced with lazy amusement.

"I'll take care to raise no false hopes," she said. "Must you go now? Good-bye."

She watched him ride away down the long beech avenue, made some necessary arrangements for her day and night's absence from home, wrote a line to Mark, bidding him join her at Ormescliffe, and was dressing for her drive there, when she beheld a pair of pretty chestnut ponies trotting briskly up to the house, driven by a slight blue figure in rather reckless fashion. Two minutes later Lynette tripped in.

"Coming to me, were you? That's very kind of you; but John might have known his wish is law to me, and that of course I should come here, as he suggested it."

"Whatever you both like best," said Lola serenely submitting, as usual, to be the shuttlecock of this impulsive young couple's arrangements.

"Well, as you are ready, come along, and I'll drive you," Lynette decided, and they started.

Lynette had certainly improved with marriage.

She had grown rounder and softer in outline, placider in manner and gentler in speech.

But to-day there was a ruffled look on her face, and a sharp tone in her voice that made Lola look at her once or twice during the drive in mild interrogation.

Featherstonehope lay in a wooded valley sunny and sheltered.

Ormescliffe Castle on the hill above it, looking seaward.

Beneath it lay St. Bride's Haven, with a tiny fleet of red-sailed fishing vessels dancing on the waters just outside, and Lynette's graceful rival, the Precious, moored alongside a little rocky pier, from which a flight of rough steps climbed up the face of the cliff to the castle.

One horn of the little bay was formed by a low headland, on which stood St. Bride's church, long ago disused, but containing the burying places of most of the old families around.

The air blew fresh and keen as Lynette's ponies trotted up the ascent that curved round the hill, giving constantly-changing views of the mighty walls and towers above.

Finally, it led direct to the obnoxious South Front, with its pillared portico and terrace.

Lynette eyed the range of windows, all of a size and one-third blank, with their striped blinds, and the geraniums in the vases, that decorated the terrace balustrade with high disfavor.

"Isn't it hideously cockney? Think of having to live a day longer than one can help in a place like that! Only fit for kitchens and servants' rooms."

"You are very comfortably lodged there, I think," said Lola; "and I believe the Caringhams made the rooms look very handsome.

"But of course we never saw the place in their time."

"What did they do to be sent to Coventry by everyone?" Lynette asked, very carelessly.

"Everything," replied Lola, emphatically.

"The men were disreputable, but the women were worse, and Lady Mildred wanted to cultivate them!

"Fancy Mark's feelings. I'm glad he never gave in to her."

Lynette dropped the subject.

Her thoughts were evidently preoccupied and disagreeably so.

Lola good-naturedly did her languid best to divert her, but in vain.

She suggested a walk.

Lynette was tired.

That they should pay some calls after luncheon.

Lynette didn't care to go without John.

Finally, heroically subduing her own feelings, she expressed a desire to see how the restorations were going on. Lynette brightened for a moment.

"The Banqueting Hall will be done next week, as far as we mean to go.

"The pictures are home again, ready to go up, and we have nearly decided on the fire shovel.

"The designs for the poker and tongs came yesterday.

"So much depends on detail," Lynette sighed; "and John's idea was to get the fireplace complete first, as it is a feature and a necessary.

"Chairs and tables can wait—besides, I'm tired of it all!"

Lola raised her eyebrows slightly.

"I'm longing to get to our own part, where we are to live.

"Nearly everything is settled, and John and I were to have gone over the last few rooms to-day with Mr. Murgatroyd's pupil, Mr. Bell, who is down here, so that everything might be settled this week; and now this horrid yacht comes in the way and wastes two days!"

Lynette pushed her plate from her impatiently.

"I offered to go over them myself, but John wouldn't hear of it; declared I must not.

"They are the rooms he had when he came home from college and the Caringhams left, and he says he won't let Mr. Bell overhaul the place without him."

"Never mind; let us see the great hall," said peace-making Lola; "John must have some good reason."

"He says the staircase is unsafe; but I don't believe it," Lynette answered, rebelliously.

Lola declined further discussion, and followed her silently from the inhabited south front to the central part of the building, where a noise of hammering and sawing, of workmen's tramping feet and gruff voices, indicated the scene of the restorations.

Lynette opened a door, and they found themselves in a great vaulted space, big enough for a cathedral, where the workmen looked like so many bees as they swarmed on high scaffoldings, toiled with their loads up and down tall ladders, or clung about the clustered capitals of the pillars.

The fireplace, in which an ox might almost have been roasted whole, was indeed a feature, and seated in its cavernous depths carefully copying a piece of old iron work, was a young man in a dusty velvet coat, with dishevelled hair.

He rose and came forward as they entered.

"May I ask, has Mr. Orme decided about those rooms?"

"Not yet," answered Lynette hesitatingly.

"I have just had a telegram from Mr. Murgatroyd.

"He hopes to get down here to-night, and I should have liked to be in readiness for him," said the young fellow, with a dissatisfied air.

"I will see what I can do," replied Lynette, hurriedly.

"Do you mind coming back, Lola." Lola did not object.

"Send Mrs. Wygram to me," Lynette said to a servant they passed on their way back to the pretty morning-room.

A sedate, motherly woman in black silk appeared.

"I want the keys of the North Tower, Mrs. Wygram."

"Yes, madam; I will bring them directly; all but the key of the Blue Room, as we used to call it. Mr. Orme keeps that himself."

"Ah, then, I can get it; I shall not want the rest.

The good woman looked disturbed.

"I do hope, madam, you will excuse me—but you won't think of going there yourself?"

"Why not?" asked Lynette, imperiously.

"Mr. Orme's orders were imperative that no one should attempt to go there. They aren't safe, indeed, madam."

"I shall do as I think fit," was all the reply vouchsafed to Mrs. Wygram, who withdrew, looking unutterable things.

"Don't be a goose, Lynette," began Lola—to empty air, for Lynette had fled.

Up the stairs, through her own room to John's dressing-room ran the naughty girl.

There stood John's mighty old-fashioned bureau, with its drawers and pigeon-holes and sliding panels.

Lynette had the keys of them all.

Her courage cooled as she peeped and pried, first in one place and then in another and she was just prepared to give up her disobedient project when she came upon the key.

It was a big rusty affair, labelled and wrapped in one of John's silk handkerchiefs, with two smaller ones.

She seized the bundle and ran, without giving herself time to think.

Back across the broad landing she sped, down a long dark corridor, through a locked door of an unused room, and so through a boarded opening into the dilapidated central pile.

She was in a sort of gallery, giving glimpses of the sea through arched openings ending in the spiral staircase of the North Tower.

She paused for a moment before ascending to look askance down the deep gloomy shaft which ended, she knew, in a door opening on the face of the cliff many feet below.

Then lightly ran up to a landing, from which one door opened.

The key turned easily in the lock, and

she flung open the door of a silent mouldy-smelling chamber, lighted by a stream of dusty sunlight pouring in through an uncleaned lattice window.

There was not much for it to shine on. A tall and gaunt bed-stead, stripped of hangings and bedding, an empty wardrobe with half-shut drawers, a toilet table, the glass dim with a veil of dust, and a green mass that once had been a candle-end in one of the sockets.

That was all except a print of John's college over the mantlepiece.

Nothing alarmed, and yet Lynette felt scared and uncomfortable.

She made a pretense to herself of being busy, lifted daintily her pretty gown from contact with the floor, and paced the room carefully.

"Fifteen feet; a very good length. We might make it to open on the North Corridor, I should think. Now for the width."

The room was panelled in a pinky grey, with brown mouldings.

The panels were of all shapes and sizes, so she was hardly surprised, after pacing across from the door by which she had entered, to find herself in front of a second.

The light streamed through its keyhole and caught her attention.

She stood irresolute for a moment, and then tried one of the two remaining keys, a small steel one, that looked as if it might belong to a patent lock; the third key was a tiny gold or gilded toy.

The door creaked stiffly and ominously, Lynette thought.

She might as well go on, however.

It was only a large, light closet after all.

Just big enough to hold a chair and a table, over which hung a portrait.

Ah!

A portrait, evidently an enlarged and tinted photograph of a beautiful, smiling woman in a fantastic dress, looking straight at Lynette with bold triumphant eyes; eyes that she knew too well, poor child; the eyes of Lady Mildred.

She sat shivering and bewildered in the dusty velvet chair, looking at them in return with a face of piteous enquiry.

The table underneath held a vase, and a large casket of gold and enamel of exquisite foreign workmanship.

Still looking into the cruel blue eyes of her rival, Lynette rose, and mechanically fitting the tiny gold key into the lock, turned it, and raised the lid.

A strong, rich perfume still hung about the quilted satin lining; within were some few letters tied with a blue ribbon.

Lynette touched them with aversion, and dropped them as her eyes caught some of the words, scrawled in an untidy, schoolgirl hand on the most gorgeous of note-paper.

A long, soft lock of red-brown hair lay beneath them and a tiny velvet shoe.

She looked no further, but, closing the lid with a bang, flung herself on the floor, crying angrily, miserably, hopelessly.

The sun got round to her window, and passed it before she could check the storm of jealous despair that possessed her.

She raised herself at last all tear-stained and soiled, and looked at her pretty slender hand with four cruel little wounds where she had bitten it to prevent herself shrieking or going into hysterics.

"What will John say?" she thought. "John? I can never see him again. I would die sooner."

She was not to be allowed the choice, however, and rose weary and spent with passion.

Lady Mildred's cruel eyes followed her to the door.

She looked it, and then the door of the bed-room, and slowly and painfully made her way down the dusty stairs.

Her dress caught somehow, her foot slipped, and she fell heavily forward against the rotting banister.

It creaked under her weight, gave way, and fell crashing down some thirty feet into the darkness, while she saved herself by a sudden jerk and grasp at a sounder part of the rail.

She was not to be taken at her rash word, and sick and giddy she crept down the rest of the stairs.

A splinter of wood had torn her hand, though she did not notice it, and the blood dropped on her gown and the handkerchief that held the keys when she stooped to pick it up.

She sped on to the inhabited part of the house, hoping to gain her own room unobserved.

"Lynette! Where are you?" she heard Lola calling. "Here is John coming home, Lynette!"

Lynette rushed to replace the keys in the bureau, then to her room, where she came full upon astonished Lola in search of her.

No wonder Lola opened her fine eyes.

Lynette's pretty blue gown was smirched and blood-spotted, her hair dusty and dishevelled, her cheeks flushed and tear-streaked.

But Lola had the gift of accepting a situation without needless comment, and when Lynette gasped, "John coming! Oh, help me!" instead of exclaiming or ringing for the maid, she tore off the soiled gown, and thrust it out of sight, poured out a basinful of cold water with a dash of eau-de-cologne in it, and brushed and knotted up the fleece of light hair that fell over her sister's shoulders, then placed herself coolly at the window to report events.

"I made John out with a field-glass coming down the hill from the station," she said, "and Mark's dog-cart on the Featherstonhope road. Yes; there's John just coming out of the shrubbery; he is taking the short cut."

Lynette finished bathing her face, and looked up wildly.

"What can I do? What will he say?"

"You had better dress for dinner at once," said Lola, calmly. "Let me get your gown out. The black Spanish lace? Yes; while you do your hair properly. John is coming over the field now, and someone after him."

"Oh, who is it? and where is Mark? He ought to overtake John."

"I can't see. A flock of sheep on the road are raising such a cloud of dust. Ah! there is the dog-cart; John will be here first, though."

"Oh, look again, Lola, do! Is no one else coming?" said Lynette, clasping on her amber necklace in frantic haste.

"Yes; the other man, Mr. Murgatroyd. I know his buff overcoat. He will soon be up to John. Let me put your roses on for you. What an exquisite Marshal Niel!"

"There, there! Tell me where they are now."

"Just at the door, all together."

"Lynette! Lynette!" sounded through the hall in John's cheery tenor.

"Run down, dear, if you wish to meet him before Mark and Mr. Murgatroyd come in."

"But I don't!" cried Lynette, desperately.

There was a sound of many voices and greetings in the hall below, and Lynette swept down the staircase to meet her husband with the decorum made obligatory by the presence of others, while Lola, wondering greatly, departed to dress as the first dinner-bell was clanging noisily from the turret above.

She wondered more at dinner; Lynette sat between Mark and the eminent R. A., talking, laughing, and looking prettier than her sister had ever imagined possible.

John was unusually silent, and once when the north rooms were mentioned shot a questioning glance at the sisters, unnoticed by his wife, and received with serene incomprehension by Mrs. Featherstone.

Lynette was silent and moody in the drawing-room alone with her sister.

"Lola," she asked, suddenly, "tell me about Lady Mildred. You promised you would once."

Lola looked perplexed.

"It's not an edifying story, dear. She married Mark for his money. She told him afterwards, and made herself as uncomfortable a wife as a man could have; fast, extravagant, bad-tempered.

"She had a sort of way with her that men admired, and she gave out that Mark was very hard on her.

"I believe she flirted to the verge of impropriety, but did manage to stop there; at least, there never was any actual scandal against her, till she died."

"Then there was a story?" demanded Lynette, her face concealed by her fan.

"Only suppositious at most. Mark was in Paris when the old butler wrote to him to come back at once.

"He did so, and found her ill with what proved to be typhus fever.

"He nursed her, let no one go near her but the London nurse besides himself. She died a week after, quite unconscious.

"She said queer things in her delirium, and servants have ears and will talk; besides the butler's letter was written before her illness was known.

"Her trunks were all packed, her maid did not know why; and a letter or two came to the house for her that Mark read and burned on the spot. He is very unforgiving, is Mark.

"He would not let her be buried with his people in Featherstone church, but at midnight she was carried out to the vault in St. Bride's, with no one but Mark to follow her."

Lynette looked gloomily across the bay to the headland, dark against the moonlit sea, where the ruined church still stood: a landmark for the fishermen. "Who was he?" she asked presently in a dry creaked voice.

"Some young fellow with lots of money, younger than herself. I only know from chance gossip. No one ever heard the whole story."

"Good night, Lola," and Lynette sprang up hurriedly. "Ask them to excuse me. My head is aching miserably, and Mr. Murgatroyd will want to play billiards half the night."

Lola kissed her fondly, and saw her depart with dire misgivings.

"I must speak to John before I sleep," Lynette was saying to herself. "He suspects something; I know his face so well. He has seen the keys. Oh, I must hear the full truth now, but it will kill me," she sobbed.

She had dismissed her maid, and, wrapped in her dressing-gown, sat trembling in the moonlight awaiting John's coming.

She heard him stirring softly, she fancied, in his dressing-room, but he never came.

Midnight came and passed.

One clanged from the clock tower, then two.

Lynette started from an uneasy doze.

Her room was in darkness, the house sunk in tomb-like stillness.

Where was John?

She listened at his door, then entered softly.

Silence and emptiness.

No trace of him, except that from his window she could see across the great black mass of building a glimmering light. It shone from the blue chamber in the deserted north tower.

She was too crushed and hopeless to weep again.

She could only give a faint protesting little moan, and sink into her chair and sleep.

Such sleep!

More painful and wearying than hours of watching.

Such dreams! playing with her great misery as with a toy, showing it to her now in one light, now in another; now as a jest, now as a dread, formless, over-shadowing horror.

She was laughing, crying, dancing, dressing, going through scene after scene, fantastic or commonplace, but always alone.

There was no John in the world; and she woke with a bitter cry to find her head resting on his shoulder and his arm round her waist.

"Oh! John, my John, what do I care if you have had a hundred Lady Mildreds for your first loves, if you will but keep me your last!"

"Why, you are dreaming, my poor little darling," said John, laughing; "and no wonder! I thought you were in bed hours ago, when I listened at the door and found all still and dark."

Lynette roused herself to look at him by the grey light of the morning.

He was in a rough yachting suit, his shoulders were dusty, and his hands smoked and grimy.

"I've had a dirty job to do," he said, apologetically, "and it had to be finished. I never thought I should be so long about it, though. I say Lynette, I'm going to the yacht for it."

"Do," cried Lynette, "and take me. I shan't sleep any more this morning."

John departed to "clean himself," while Lynette hurried into a blue serge dress, and was ready as soon as he was.

They stole out of their rooms and down the corridor to the forbidden region.

Lynette shuddered as they came upon the staircase with its broken rail.

A rush of cold air and grey light came up from somewhere below, and the head of John's factotum, the steward of the "Precious," was seen ascending to their level.

"I've brought the boat round sir."

"Got the cord and weights?"

"Here, sir."

"All right. Wait here till I call you. Will you come with me for a minute or two, dear? The stair is quite safe close to the wall."

He helped her up, testing carefully each step with his own full weight before he let her venture on it.

"Did you know I had been here before, John?" she took courage to whisper.

"I guessed it; look here," and he opened his hand, showing the tiny gold key. "I found this, all mossed with blood, where you had dropped it, and that told the whole story."

"Were you angry?"

"Angry? My darling! As if I had room in my heart for anything but thankfulness that you were saved to me," and he stopped to give her a mighty hug.

The Blue Room door stood open.

A tremendous litter was on the hearth; blackened scraps of paper, pieces of broken glass, and a particularly evil smell was in the air.

Lynette turned pale, and sat down on the first chair, and John cleared his throat, and seemed singularly wanting in his accustomed readiness of speech.

"You see, dear—I ought to tell you everything, you know. It's a nasty story—I don't care to bother you with it before I could help—but Murgatroyd coming, you see."

Here John ran aground.

"About Lady Mildred?" suggested Lynette, in a hard, forced little voice.

"Exactly so," said John, floating off again. "I knew her, you see, when I was home for the holidays, and thought no end of her.

"She was so sweet, so gracious, so unhappy. Something between a queen and a saint in my very juvenile eyes.

"I made up lots of romances about her, till one day, when they all broke down. I was here a good deal.

"Spencer Caringham and I were school friends, and one Easter I found Ponsonby Caringham, the eldest son, at home—an awful scamp he was.

"Spencer told me no end of queer stories about his brother, and one day about Lady Mildred, for which I gave the poor little beggar a licking there and then. That night, however, Ponsonby tried to get me to take a note to Featherstonehope, and then I saw it was all true, and went back to school disgusted, and believing all things against all women—except always my own little sweetheart.

"Then I heard of her death, and that she was to be buried like a pauper or a suicide!

"I don't know what put the romantic notion into my head that I, at least, would show her honor, and I got away unobserved caught a night train, and arrived at St. Bride's church just in time to see Mark Featherstone leaving.

"The vault was already boarded up. I had brought a wreath of white flowers, so I just laid it at the closed door and was going when I came full on Ponsonby Caringham looking like a ghost in the moonlight. He went on like a madman, raved, and tried to tear down the boarding of the vault, and at last flung himself on the grass before it, crying like a child.

"'Did you bring that, Orme?' he asked, pointing to the wreath.

"'You are a good little fellow. She always liked you.'

"I got away from him at last, and back without detection.

"Some time after I got a letter from Ponsonby, enclosing two keys.

"He was going abroad, into the Turkish service, and he left those rooms in my care, begging me to destroy his treasured relics when occasion required."

"And a tough job it has been," ended John, stretching himself.

"A whole case filled with things under that table, and a portrait and letter. I burned and smashed all I could, and now I'm going to drown the rest before we go to the yacht. Hullo, Duncan!"

The grizzled head of the old sailor appeared in the doorway in answer to the call.

"Just fasten up and weight that, will you," pointing to a canvas-covered bundle on the floor. "Now, Lynette."

They made their way in silence down the treacherous staircase to its lowest depth, where a door opened out on the face of the cliff.

There was a path, and some rocky steps down to the harbor where the yacht's boat was in waiting.

"Do you see that big rock just under St. Bride's church?" John said. "They say there is a fathomless depth of water there."

John took the oars, and Lynette steered carefully out of the rocky headland.

The cliffs rose black and grim, there was a great silence on the grey, cold sea, and she shivered as she took the oars while John lifted the heavy bundle and lowered it over the side as gently as he could.

Down, down it went into the cold, dark water, with a sullen splash and a whirl of foam-bells; and the boat, after one great rock, shot out merrily from the chill shadow into the first rays of the level sun.

Lynette's heart gave one great bound in accord.

John's kind eyes were smiling on her, the last vestige of her folly at the bottom of the sea, world all fresh and glowing in the warm beams of the new day's sun. Was there ever such a happy little woman since the first sun shone?

Lola looked from her window an hour or two later.

"Why, Mark! I might have spared you and myself a night's anxiety about these young people. Look over there. If they haven't been out boating before breakfast! ——Oh, Mark, I wonder," sighed Lola, stirred for a moment out of her satisfied repose, "if you and I were as young, should we be as blissfully foolish as they are?"

"I don't know that we should," replied Mark, prosaically. "But they may think themselves lucky when they are as old as we are if they are half as happy!"

Scientific and Useful.

TOBACCO.—There is a popular notion that the use of tobacco is in some degree a protective against infectious diseases. A French medical journal supports this belief, saying that it considers tobacco an energetic parasiticide capable of acting upon microzymes and microbia, and that, while it thinks its abuse liable to produce well-marked effects on man, it is, nevertheless, convinced that it is capable of rendering important service in protecting him against epidemic and contagious diseases.

PRESERVING.—A plan recently introduced into Belgium for preserving wood from the decay produced by the atmosphere, water, etc., is to fill the pores of the wood with liquid gutta-percha, which is said to effectually preserve it from moisture and the action of the sun. The process employed consists in exhausting the air from the pores of the wood, and filling them with gutta percha solution, in pouring the solution in the pores. The solid gutta percha is liquefied by mixing it with paraffin in proportion of about two-thirds of gutta percha to one-third of paraffin; the mixture is then subjected to the action of heat, and the gutta percha becomes sufficiently liquid to be easily introduced into the pores of the wood. The gutta percha liquefied by this process hardens in the pores of the wood as it becomes cold.

Farm and Garden.

COWS.—There is no need of bothering about a cow's pulse to find out if she is well or not; simply look at her nose. If well, it will be moist and cold; if feverish, dry and hot. She is like a dog in this respect. A staring coat or a hollow eye are also points indicating trouble, and as symptoms of disease they are more to be dreaded than the dry nose. Nothing should be given a milch cow that, so far as quality is concerned, we would not be willing to eat and drink ourselves. Pastures should be free from weeds, brush and rank grasses, also from bitter herbs and low-growing deciduous and evergreen trees.

THE HAWK.—It will surprise old-fashioned poultry growers to learn that the common hawk is regarded as a valuable bird. He destroys one hundred field mice for every chicken, and if there is a fair amount of shrubbery around the henyard, very few chickens will be lost from his depredations.

BLOOD AS FOOD.—The use of blood as a food for cattle has, it is stated, been the subject of experiment in Denmark by a chemist, who, as a result, has now invented and patented a new kind of cake, in which blood forms one of the chief ingredients. This new food is said to be exceedingly nutritious and wholesome, and is eaten with avidity by all sorts of animals, and even by cows and horses, which have naturally a strong dislike to the smell of blood.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

SIXTY-FOURTH YEAR.

SATURDAY EVENING, AUGUST 18, 1888.

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THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

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PRIDE OF BIRTH.

Pride of ancestry seems to be inherent in most of the human race. The members of a family which owes its origin to an earl or a duke undoubtedly occupy a distinguished position, but the way in which they sometimes speak of "our family," is like a wet blanket to people whose most distinguished ancestor was a justice of the peace, or a county sheriff.

It cannot be denied that it is pleasant to think that one's forefathers were honest and upright men; and that it gives one a certain feeling of superb satisfaction to be able to say:

"My ancestors never did a mean or ignoble thing."

Nevertheless, it is a fact that many of our greatest men have sprung from humble origin. This, however, in itself involves no degradation.

A man cannot always be judged by his grandfather. The mantle of the good old gentleman—for all grandfathers are supposed to be good—does not always fall on his descendants.

After all, the world cares a good deal more about what you are than what your grandfather was.

If he, or any of the rest of your people, ever did anything that was mean or wicked, you may rest assured that everybody will know about that, and it will count against you; but the virtues of your ancestors will seldom, if ever, benefit you.

You cannot make a living on the reputation of your father, or the memory of your great-uncle, or the fame of your mother-in-law.

If you were the son of Napoleon Bonaparte, and did not pay for your board, your landlord would pack you off just as readily as he would the son of a coal-heaver or hod-carrier.

It is foolish, therefore, to brag of your ancestry. If they performed great deeds, and history has recorded them, there is no need of your flinging the fact at the head of every new acquaintance you may happen to make.

Again, do not be for ever telling people that you were not brought up to this or that. What do you suppose the world at large cares how you were brought up? If they never used plated ware on your father's table, or boiled cabbage for fear it would scent the house, or ate onions because of the flavor, let these facts pass; it is not necessary that everybody you know should be told of it.

Build up a character for yourself which shall be independent of any support which the fame of your ancestors can give. Make yourself a man—a man in so full and large an acceptance of the word that no one shall ask "Who is he?" but shall honor you for yourself, and not as the son of another.

We are not what our fathers were, but what, under Heaven, we make ourselves; and the lowliest born in all this world may rise to such a height of moral grandeur that, though he were the son of a king, no man would speak of it as a fact in his favor.

SANCTUM CHAT.

THE largest room in the world, under one roof, and unbroken by pillars, is at St. Petersburg, Russia. It is six hundred and twenty feet long by one hundred and fifty in breadth. By daylight it is used for military displays, and a battalion can completely manœuvre in it. Twenty thousand wax tapers are required to light it. The roof of this structure is a single arch of iron, and it exhibits a remarkable engineering skill in the architect.

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A MARYLAND County Treasurer says he wonders not so much that defalcations are frequent as that they are not more numerous, considering the heavy temptations. He says that when he was first put in charge of his office he was fairly deluged with "private," "personal," "confidential," and other communications from New York, proving—on paper—that he could double all investments with certainty if he would entrust his money to the parties sending the communications.

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OUR periodical "numberings of the people" never fail to be attended by episodes of a curious and ludicrous character; but, as might be expected an East Indian census-taking has its own peculiarities. During the recent enumeration in the Punjaub, for instance, a native official returned a village pond as an "inhabited house," and when called upon for an explanation, justified himself on the ground that he had found the pond in question occupied by a fakir, who announced his intention of remaining in the water till the unholy rites of the census were over.

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THE sensible housewife "keeps things cool" for herself and her family letting in the night air through the wide open doors and windows, and keeping the doors closed and the blinds shut during the glare of the day. There are many other small points, the observance of which adds to the comfort of hot weather living. By starting five minutes earlier for the car, hurry is avoided, and nothing heats like hurry, as the blazing faces and streaming brows of the late comers in cars and on the boats testify. The sensible fashion of carrying sun umbrellas has added much to the comfort of town-dwelling gentlemen.

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LABORERS in Mexico fare hard. Thirty cents a day is the common rate of wages, and for that the natives are content to perform the heaviest labor. Farm work, mining, factory labor, and domestic services are all alike paid low. The custom of making loans to laborers to be repaid by work, is common, and tends materially to prevent their social advancement. The large factories are thus enabled to retain their hands as long as they desire. The latter are not allowed to leave their employment until they have paid their debts; and as that is generally impossible out of wages which are barely enough for support, the debtor continues a virtual slave to his life's end.

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A RECENT court trial in which Sir John Astley, the well-known backer of Rowell, the pedestrian, undertook his defence, on the ground that he was too poor to pay an attorney, developed the fact that a large number of the hansom cabs of London are now owned by the aristocracy. Sir John himself and the Duke of Marlborough are partners in one; Mr. Lowther, another tremendous swell, is also in the business; and the Earl of Shrewsbury openly displays his coronet and initials on the large number of hansoms he owns. This partly accounts for the splendid attire of the hansom drivers, and for such bold and startling innovations as the white Holland which they now throw over the black of their cabs, so as to protect passengers from heat.

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WOMEN are of far more sensitive and nimble minds than men, and can better see through others. Their over-suspicious nature often fancies things to be passing in those they are inspecting, but also often hits on what is really going on within our bosoms. They connect the attack with its cause; they see into the thicket where resentment is lurking. This clear-seeing of women is often astonishing—even of women little remarkable for abilities. It seemed as if their passions supplied force to their intellect and sharpened their wits. We have known a jealous woman actually to know what passed within the mind of her lover and her rival, as if she could see through their breasts to scan their thoughts and examine their designs.

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A large part of life's burdens are self-imposed, and wholly needless. Fears of calamities, which never happen, a doleful habit of looking at the world, a suspicious disposition, a jealous turn of mind—these are the tyrants that load us with burdens heavy to bear, but needless to carry. If we should honestly examine the various burdens of our lives, we should be surprised to find how many of them there are of this character. Not only may we drop them if we will, but justice to others demand that we should. A man or woman habitually unhappy is essentially selfish, and is always a thorn in the community. There are enough crosses and trials of life which must be borne, without manufacturing artificial and needless ones; and the more thoroughly we rid ourselves of the latter, the more energy and spirit we can bring to bear upon the former.

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A GRADUATE of Dublin University, who has served a term as stenographic reporter for Parliament, and has written a text book on shorthand, confesses that the difficulty of reading any kind of shorthand is an insuperable barrier to its general use, and that though he has worked with scores of shorthand reporters, he never knew one who could read his own notes with the facility of common writing. Moreover, it would not be well for shorthand writing to become general, since the necessity of writing words slowly and laboriously in longhand provides a sensible check on the volubility of writers. If shorthand could be set up as a common medium of communication, it would be more trouble to read it than to write it. A man might be inundated with correspondence in shorthand which would occupy a great part of his time to read, and eventually discover that most of it was not worth deciphering.

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A WOMAN of Monroe county, this State, in reply to an advertisement of her husband, cautioning the public not to trust her on his account, as she had left his bed and board without any just provocation, replies sharply that "the facts in the case, as he calls them, are false in every particular. First, he don't own nor never had a bed of his own; not even a straw tick to sleep upon. Second, and not the least, he has no board, as he alleges, nor anything to eat whatever of his own that can or will satisfy hunger. Third, as for getting goods on his account, I don't think I could buy anything on his credit, regardless of his notice, whatever. Fortunately, I don't have to buy anything on credit, and, even if I should, my own credit would be equally as good, if not better, than his. As for cause and provocation, I have sufficient. 'Truth will prevail.' I caution all persons against trusting him on my account, as I shall positively pay no debts whatever contracted by him."

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To retain or recover health, persons should be relieved from anxiety concerning disease. The mind has power over the body—for a person to think he has a disease will often produce that disease. This we see effected when the mind is intensely concentrated upon the disease of another. We have seen a person seasick in anticipation of a voyage, before reaching the vessel. A blindfolded man slightly pricked in the arm has fainted and died from believing he was bleeding to death. Therefore, persons to remain well should be cheerful and happy; and sick persons should have their minds diverted as much as possible. It is often by their want of faith that they die. As a man thinketh, so is he. If he wills not to die, he can often live in spite of the disease; and, if he has little or no attachment to life, he will slip away as easily as a child will fall asleep. Men live by their minds as well as by their bodies. Their bodies have no life of themselves; they are only receptacles of life—tenements for their minds, and the will has to do in continuing the physical occupancy or giving it up.

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How often do we hear it said in praise of certain people that "they always had a good word for every one." Such people are kindly spoken of in return; they have many friends, and are held up as subjects worthy of being followed by the more careful and cautious. These apparent monuments of kindness may serve some good purpose; but to our mind the goodness of their motives is to be strongly contrasted with the damage they cause by too freely extolling those whom they know little or nothing about. A rogue well recommended, and that, too, by people of high moral standing, is a very dangerous person to be at large. And yet how many such swindlers are among us. Testimonials of character are supposed to be given for the guidance and protection of innocent people; but in how many cases have these recommendations aided the workings of thieves and scoundrels. The man who is even over-slow to praise any one will live a long time before his silence in this respect can have done as much harm as a person who is too lavish and careless with his eulogies may do in a day.

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A STORY is told of a London lady of high repute, and much beloved and respected, but who, having gone in for the esthete phase, determined to act up to the character she had assumed, and at a party given at her house, after having treated her friends to a few melodious twangs upon the ancient lyre kept in her husband's studio to assist him in painting his antique groups, she disappeared from the room. Presently she returned with a crystal platter, on which was an antique goblet turned upside down. Going round to each guest, she whispered, in a hollow tone, "Supper is ready," at which announcement the guest who accepted the invitation to ascend to the supper-room, was expected to re-turn the goblet. The male esthete, on his side, keeps a taper burning before the portrait of the lady who pleases him best; never owns his love, but goes on sighing and moaning, and dining and supping at the same time, with the most self-satisfied calm imaginable. An effort is now being made by the leaders of fashion to crush this affectation, which is enervating the youth of both sexes, and converting some of the salons of London into the semblance of the mortuary chapels of the Campo Santo at Pisa.

—

POLITICAL offenders and obstructionists in Abyssinia are treated in a manner which some other Christian countries may well take into consideration for suppressing unparliamentary language, and to insure calm debate. The offenders are arrested, chained, and placed on a small table land on the top of Abba Salama, a high, rocky, precipitous mount, about thirty miles from the city. So sheer and steep are its sides that the prisoners are drawn up by ropes. Their chances of escape are nil, unless indeed they dash themselves into eternity on the rocks below. There is a land on which they may grow grain, and wells in which they find water. There is no speaker to keep order, and they may, if they choose, abuse prime ministers and crowned heads to their heart's content, but they return no more to the ways of the world. As for the rebellious subjects taken in arms against their king, they are often despatched by that Christian monarch in the most expeditious and painless manner. Gunpowder is forced into their nostrils, ears and mouths, a lighted time fuse attached to either one of these useful members, and when the explosion takes place it generally incapacitates the victim from further intrigue.

TWILIGHT.

Soft fades away the last long-lingering glory
That stained the amber threshold of the west;
And balmy twilight murmurs the sweet story
Earth loves the best—
Of silence and of peace, of longed-for sleep and rest.

The sea that erewhile, one vast changeful splendor,
Fell in a foam of jewels on the shore,
Now lights its pallor only with eve's tender
Star, that far o'er
Its opalescent waves glows brighter evermore.

O hour most beautiful! O hour most holy!
Bid all the weary world's harsh discords cease!
Lay thy cool hand upon her heart, and wholly
Give her release
From pain and care, close clasped in the embrace of peace.

—M. S.

Lottie's Conquest.

BY E. LINWOOD SMITH.

THERE never was such an ill-tempered, cross-grained old man in this world as Dunstan Reade.

He lived alone in a square red-brick house in the middle of a very desolate flat field.

The garden around it had fallen into a dreadful state: no gardener had entered it for many years.

It was full of tall nettles and of long, straggling, unpruned bushes.

The windows were grimed with dust, never having been cleaned within the memory of man.

The most miserable-looking object in the place was old Dunstan Reade himself.

His face was wrinkled and withered like a piece of yellow parchment.

His shabby clothes hung loosely upon his skinny limbs.

His great shaggy eyebrows lowered like thatched eaves over his sunken eyes.

He lived quite alone with one old man, who was almost as old and as grim as himself, and who cooked, and swept, and washed for him entirely without any assistance from any female whatever—for if there was one thing on earth that Mr. Reade hated and abominated it was the whole race of womankind.

The sight of a petticoat was odious to him.

The sound of a woman's voice made him shudder.

His servant had strict orders never, on pain of instant dismissal, to admit one of them within his doors.

It was currently reported of him that for twenty years he had not exchanged one word with a living woman.

He was looked upon as a hardened old miser by the people in the neighborhood, and there was not a man, woman or child for miles around who would not cross over to the other side of the road sooner than come face to face with this ill-favored and sour-visaged old man.

But Lottie Harfield, from the end of her father's garden on the sunny hill-side above the village, used to sit and look down pitifully and sorrowfully upon the gloomy red-brick house in the valley below, where old Mr. Reade dragged out his unlovely existence.

She was the softest-hearted, gentlest little thing in the world, with child-like, clear blue eyes, and fluffy hair of yellow gold.

She had an innocent fearlessness about her that seemed to belong more to the childhood she had left behind her than to the womanhood upon which she had fairly entered.

She had always a kind word for everybody, and when she heard people talking of that dreadful miser Reade, and telling stories of his bad heart and evil nature, she would sigh very pitifully, and then say—

"Poor old man! it does turn people sour when every man's hand is against them. Perhaps he is not so bad after all."

"But, Miss Lottie," objected a friend who was present, "what do you say to a man who perfectly hates the sight of a woman?"

"Perhaps some woman has treated him badly years ago; and not one has ever been gentle and kind enough since, to wipe out the bad impression."

"Lottie always makes excuses for everybody," said her father, smiling.

Lottie went on walking up and down the garden-walk from which she could see Mr. Reade's house, musing to herself upon his miserable and lonely fate, until she became quite possessed with the idea that somebody ought to do something for him.

"Papa," she said one day in pursuance of this idea, "may I ask Mr. Read to dinner one night?"

"Mr. Reade! Good gracious! Lottie, you must be mad! Do you imagine that he would come?"

Her father laughed aloud at the bare idea of such a guest.

"Well, I don't know. If he were asked nicely he might come I think."

"My little girl, you might ask him from now to next Christmas, and you would only get rough words out of him for your pains."

"But you would have no objection, would you, papa, to his dining here?"

"None whatever if you can get him to come," answered Mr. Harfield, laughing, "but I don't think there is much fear of that; and now I must be off. Good-bye, my pet."

Mr. Harfield was a doctor and his high gig was waiting to take him off on his daily rounds.

He kissed his daughter, and went away laughing to himself over her last new fancy, and Lottie was left alone.

Thus what does this remarkable young lady do but go upstairs and array herself in her very prettiest dress—a soft, creamy foulard, covered with wonderful fluffings and puffings of lace—for Lottie was an extravagant little person, and her father spoilt her in the matter of dress.

Then she took her hat and her sunshade, and sallied forth thus equipped to call on old Mr. Reade, the miser.

"Is your master in?"

"No, he be not," replied the austere guardian of Mr. Reade's domicile, gruffly, and preparing to slam the door in the unwonted visitor's face.

"Will he be long out?" says Lottie perseveringly.

"He might be and he mightn't," was the unhopeful rejoinder.

"Well, I shall come in and wait for him till he comes back!"

Now this took all Timothy's breath away from him.

No such audacious proposal had ever been made to him before.

"No, that you can't do! Mr. Reade don't allow no women-folk within his doors to pull things about and mess up his papers and books!"

"Oh! you needn't be afraid of that; I shouldn't think of touching his things. Here is half-a-crown for you, and please show me into Mr. Reade's room at once."

Something in the young lady's tone of authority—something too, perhaps, in the sight of the shining half-crown she put into his not unwilling hand—took all the bravado and bounce out of old Timothy.

He touched his shaggy forelock meekly, and showed Miss Harfield into the one sitting-room his master used in the whole house.

"Well, you'll have to take the blame if the master is angry," he grumbled, "for I don't know whatever he will say to me for letting you in. It's quite against all rules."

"Oh, I don't mind that at all; he may scold me as much as he likes!" said Lottie, cheerfully.

Then her quick eye looked around the dingy, dusty and very comfortless-looking room.

"Take that tray away, please!" she said, pointing to the slatternly remains of a scanty breakfast left upon the table.

Old Timothy never could tell afterwards in relating the story to his cronies, why it was that he obeyed her, but somehow or other he did.

"She just said, 'Take away that tray, please,' and I picked 'un up and carried 'un out. I should have stood on my head if she'd ha' told me. She had that way with her!"

Then Lottie took a brief survey of the chamber in which she found herself.

She was too true a daughter of a scientific and well-bred man to attempt any tidying or dusting of those dearly-loved books and papers, which she found here in as great profusion as in her father's study at home.

But somehow her airy touch went round the shabby room and brightened it very much.

She straightened a rumpled chair-cover, put back a useless stool into its place, wiped the pens afresh and laid them in the pen-rack, then she opened a window and let a little fresh sunshine and balmy summer air into the mustiness of the stiflingly-close atmosphere.

In making her little rounds she glanced, without touching them, at the books and papers and she made the discovery that they were all on the one subject—chemistry.

She did not of course understand quite what branch of the science it was that Mr. Reade was studying, but evidently he was engrossed in some very deep researches, and this made her quite cheerful and hopeful.

"I knew the man was not so bad as he was painted," she said to herself, joyfully. "A man with one absorbing taste or pursuit has always a vulnerable point. I shall get at him somehow, I think."

Then she sat down in the one comfortable arm-chair in the room—Mr. Reade's own particular seat—and waited for his arrival.

Well, she had to wait a long time.

The day was warm.

A bee hummed drowsily in through the open window.

There was a distant sheep-bell tinkling on the hill.

Presently Lottie fell fast asleep in old Dunstan Reade's leather-covered arm-chair.

That was how he found her, when, quite unprepared for any such marvellous discovery (having let himself into the house without encountering Timothy), Mr. Reade came in by himself into his study.

Timothy, to be sure, heard him come in fast enough, but he was in a dreadful fright of what would happen, and kept himself quiet and still in the kitchen, awaiting the event.

Well, Dunstan Reade came in, and there was a white mass of soft silk and lace curled up in his arm-chair.

He did not see quite what it was at first.

"Bless my heart!" he said, below his breath, and came nearer.

Then he saw a white hand and wrist thrown back over the arm of the chair.

"A woman! The impertinent baggage!"

In another minute he would have shouted for Timothy, have raved aloud at him and at his unconscious visitor—but something arrested him.

Perhaps if she had been awake he would have turned her out summarily and roughly, refusing to listen to what she had to say, and only furious with her for being there.

But she was asleep, and she lay so still, and looked so perfectly lovely in her child-like unconsciousness, that somehow he stood still and said nothing, only looked at her.

Her bright hair made a sort of sunlight in the room, her little pink and white face looked so refined and sweet amongst the unlovely surroundings of that dreary place.

Her dress was so dainty and so very pretty.

The little hands flung back carelessly, with their blue veins showing through the creamy skin, the small foot peeping out beneath her skirt; all was so unlike anything he had seen for so long.

She looked like a chaotic flower fallen by mistake into a cabbage-garden.

Dunstan Reade drew a long breath, and sat down opposite to her, with his eyes riveted on her face.

It did not occur to him to wonder who she was, nor where she came from.

He only knew that he was gazing at something that was passing fair!

"If she wakes she will spoil it all!" he said to himself. "I haven't seen such a sight as this for years—not for years!" and he sat quite still, hardly daring to breathe for fear he should wake her.

Old Timothy, who had crept outside the door to listen to what would happen, could not make out the absolute silence within the room a bit, and stole back to his kitchen again, quite puzzled and perplexed.

Presently something—the consciousness, perhaps, that somebody was looking at her—roused Lottie from her slumber.

She stirred uneasily, then half opened her eyes.

Dunstan Reade's face grew hard and grim again.

Asleep, she was a lovely picture—awake, she was merely a noisy, shrill-voiced woman—one of the sex he hated.

She would be horribly frightened, he reflected, with grim satisfaction, when she awoke and found him sitting opposite to her.

If you have seen a child awake out of its mid-day sleep, with just a little stretch of its arms, and a rosy flush upon its face, and a little opening of its rose-bud lips—that was how Lottie awoke.

Then, when she was awake, she did not start up nervously, or look frightened and scared—no, not in the very least.

The image of that grim-faced miser glaring at her did not appear to alarm her at all.

She just moved her head a very little against the back of the chair and smiled at him.

"Oh, you have come back, have you?" said Lottie.

"What are you doing here?" asked Mr. Reade, sternly.

"Well, I was waiting for you," answered the girl, unabashed.

"Who let you in? Don't you know that I don't allow women in here—a set of baggages—lazy hussies everyone of them!"

"Well, so they are—you are quite right!" answered Lottie, with a little laugh. "You see, I am no better than the rest of them, for I went to sleep; otherwise I should have dusted your papers."

Dunstan gave a sort of gasp, and looked jealously around.

"No, don't be alarmed. I didn't touch them—I knew better; I went to sleep. What are you reading all those books on chemistry for, Mr. Reade?"

He looked at her suspiciously.

The charm she had thrown over him in her slumber had partly faded with her waking presence.

Still there was yet something that subjugated his morose and savage nature.

She was different from what he had remembered women to be.

"What do you want to find out about me?" he growled.

"Oh, nothing about you. I only should have liked to understand some of the books you seem to be studying."

"Women don't understand things—they are silly, ignorant creatures, and know nothing."

"Oh! but they needn't be silly and ignorant at all, they can learn. If you would teach me, I could learn quite well. I have quite as many brains as you have probably."

"What?"

"Well, so I have. I don't know so much about chemistry, perhaps, but I know a great many other things better than you do. If you will teach me, then I will teach you, if you like."

Now this was altogether such a new view of things to Dunstan Reade that he was quite nonplussed, and did not know how to answer.

He fell back after a minute upon his old line of roughness and incivility.

"I can't stop wasting my time talking to you. I suppose you have come to beg for somebody? I never give money away—I haven't any to give—so you can go."

"Oh, dear, no! I don't want anything at all. I never thought whether you had any money or not."

"Well, I haven't—not a farthing! I am as poor as a pauper! These books are all I have in the world!"

"I don't care at all whether you are rich or poor! I only came to ask you to dinner."

"What?" screamed the old man; he could hardly believe his ears. "Do you want to insult me?"

"Oh, dear, no! Why should I insult you?"

"Don't you think I can afford to pay for my own dinner?"

"I really never thought about that. I want you to come to dinner, so that you may talk to papa and me. Papa is a doctor, you know, and he is very fond of chemistry, so I am sure you will get on together."

"Oh, you are Doctor Harfield's daughter, then?"

"Yes, I am Lottie Harfield; and you are coming to dinner with us to-night—please say yes—seven o'clock sharp; quite a plain dinner, and a talk about chemistry."

Lottie rose to her feet and picked up her hat from the ground preparatory to taking her departure.

Dunstan Reade looked down at his hands then at his boots, then something that was like a smile passed over that wintry countenance.

"I can't dine with you," he murmured; "it is so long—so many years since—I don't know how to behave myself in company."

"That is one of the things I am going to teach you," said Lottie, laughing, and shaking out her skirts.

He put out his finger gently, cautiously, and touched the laces of her dress tentatively, as a man might touch a flower or a butterfly.

"Pretty frock, isn't it?" said Lottie, carelessly. "I put it on on purpose to come and see you."

"It must have cost a great deal," said Dunstan Reade, trying to look stern again.

Lottie shrugged her shoulders.

"I don't know; papa has the bill. I never think of that. I like to have pretty things about me, don't you?"

Dunstan looked up into her bright young face, and a sort of glow spread over his own.

"I think so," he said; "but I don't know much about it."

"No? Well, that is another thing I shall teach you, Mr. Reade; look at that butterfly that has come in through the open window—there is something for you to look at, you know. And you are coming to dinner, are you not?"

"Yes, if you really wish it," said Mr. Reade, quite meekly.

"Timothy, I am going out to dinner to-night," said the miser to his servant that same day.

"Mercy on us!" ejaculated Timothy, fairly staggering back against the wall.

"Go and look up in the lumber-room in the third black box beneath the skeleton case," continued Mr. Reade, sternly frowning, "and you will find a mulberry velvet evening-suit of clothes and knee-breeches, stockings and buckle-shoes—go and find them, you stupid, and don't stand gaping there!"

An angry stamp of the foot sent Timothy flying up to the attic after the mulberry suit.

"Papa, Mr. Reade is coming to dinner!" said Lottie to her father that afternoon.

"No!" exclaimed Mr. Harfield. "Why, what a witch you are, Lottie! Good gracious, child, what am I to talk to the old mummy about?" added the worthy doctor in despair.

"Chemistry, papa. I have found out that it is his hobby; and give him the best claret you have in the cellar."

"How on earth did you do it, child?" cried her father.

"I really can't tell you, papa," laughed Lottie. "I only talked to him as if he was a rational being. He is only a poor, cross, lonely old man, who wants a little kindness to bring him out of his narrow, selfish life."

The evening came.

Mr. Reade, very shy and very subdued, appeared duly in the mulberry suit.

He had shaved and brushed himself with a care that had been unknown to him for years.

His timid look at Lottie as he came in nearly made her father laugh.

"That child," said the doctor to himself, "could tame a bear if she tried."

Lottie nodded and smiled at her guest, and when dinner was announced, came up to him and led him into the next room herself.

Mr. Harfield, although a hard-working medical man, had also large independent means of his own.

He pursued his occupation as an occupation rather than as a necessity.

Everything in his house and at his table was of the best.

Thanks to Lottie, everything was also of the most refined.

The flowers, the silver dishes, the glitter of the glass and china, so bewildered our friend Dunstan Reade that he was quite meek and amiable, and as to talk about chemistry—not a bit of it! all he did was to gaze at Lottie adoringly, much to her father's amusement.

The sight of her in her fresh young beauty carried him back years of his life, and bridged over a vast yawning space of hideous misery and self-absorption.

She reminded him of someone in the past vistas of his life—someone who had been gentle and tender to him before his face had been wrinkled or his heart had grown hard—someone who had smiled at him and had been kind, and yet who had turned from his love and all his wealth to marry his penniless cousin, and that was what had turned old Dunstan into such a man as he was now.

And Lottie, Heaven bless her! was like that faded idol of his youth—not in her face but in something indescribable in her sweetness and frankness, in the daintiness of her dress and the faint perfume of violets that her presence gave forth.

The old man was quite softened and gentle.

He did not say one hard or unkind word.

He tried so hard to behave well at the

dinner-table, and to polish up his long-dormant manners, that the effort was almost painfully evident to his host.

Then after dinner Mr. Harfield was summoned away to a patient, and Dunstan Reade and Lottie were left alone.

Then the old man got up and came and stood meekly by the side of her chair, and timidly taking the little white hand, he raised it to his lips.

"I have been a very bad man, my dear," he said, tremblingly; "but I am not quite so wicked, perhaps, as everybody thinks."

"Of course not," said Lottie, cheerfully; "nobody is really bad."

Her eyes were full of tears, and she was much touched.

"You know you remind me of someone—someone whom I was very fond of years and years ago; but she was cruel to me, and I could not forgive her. So my heart hardened and became all crusted over with thick ice; but you have broken the ice, Lottie; and when I saw you asleep, dear, I thought one of heaven's angels had strayed unawares into my miserable house; and then you woke and spoke, and somehow what you said, and the way you said it, struck home into myself, and I felt that you had come to save me. I cried out when you said you were as wise as I; but, dear, you are far wiser, for you are good. Tell me what I am to do, Lottie, and I will do it."

That was how Lottie Harfield made the great conquest of her life.

Later on she was wooed and won, but nothing in her whole life ever gave her such pure happiness and delight as the thought of that poor, miserable old man, whom she had redeemed from his existence of wretchedness and selfishness.

Under her auspices the red house in the valley was cleansed, and swept, and painted, and furnished from cellar to garret.

Two brisk, neat handmaidens of her own choosing replaced the effete and crabbed old Timothy.

The garden was cleared and replanted and filled with sweet, bright flowers.

Muslin curtains fluttered at the windows, and the hall-door, standing wide open, seemed to invite the passing guest to come in.

But the greatest change of all is in old Dunstan himself.

He was really possessed of great wealth, and now makes no secret of it.

He gives largely to the local charities, and no one who is sick and in want ever appeals to him in vain.

He is no longer crabbed and rough, but cheerful and sociable.

Lottie has made him send articles and reviews upon his beloved chemistry to the leading scientific papers of the day, and his name is now well-known and respected amongst clever men.

"For," says his little mentor, "if a man has a talent like yours, it is very wicked indeed not to give the rest of mankind the benefit of it."

Lottie trots down every day to the red house and says she takes lessons of her old friend.

He always maintains, though, that she teaches him tenfold what she learns from him.

In short, Dunstan Reade is a happy old man because he is no longer selfish and greedy of gain, and because he has found something to love and to live for.

"From the day, sir," he says to Mr. Harfield, "that I found your little girl asleep in my arm-chair my life became an altered thing."

As to Lottie, she only says:

"I always knew that he was better than he was painted—everybody is. If you want to do good to anybody, assume the good in them and ignore the evil."

Clever little Lottie!

A Very Bad Man.

BY F. B. NELSON.

A FRESH breeze and a very clear blue sky.

A little white-winged cutter-yacht was dancing merrily over the foam-crested waves, with all her sails well set, and the sapphire water swirling past her bows.

She was rapidly nearing a deep, sheltered bay on the north-western coast of England.

Two young men in blue yachting-suits were standing on deck, looking anxiously towards the shore.

One of them had his glasses up to his eyes and seemed to be gazing through them with the deepest interest.

He was the taller and older of the two, and was a singularly handsome and well-built man.

The other, stouter and shorter, lounged idly against a portion of the rigging, and yawned once or twice out of sheer weariness.

The land to which the little yacht, "Azalea" was rapidly approaching was wild-looking and desolate.

A rocky coast, a small wooded plain, and then range behind range of round-topped green hills—hills that were too tame in outline to charm the eye of an artist, and too evidently lacking in purple and brown heather to be suggestive of grouse to the mind of a sportsman.

"Don't look very hopeful, Jack!" remarked the younger of the two friends. "What are you looking at through those glasses that have been glued to your eyes for the last ten minutes?"

"I think I can make out the house," answered John, fourth Earl of Lorrimer, without moving the glasses.

"Good Heavens! you're not thinking of trying the house, are you?" exclaimed the other.

Lord Lorrimer laughed.

"My dear Walter, don't be alarmed, there can't be a whole stick of furniture in the poor old place that isn't mouldering away! My father never was there for forty years before he died, and this is my first visit to it. There can only be an old woman in charge. No cook, no butler, no food of any kind. Do you suppose I should be so rash as to take you, of all people in the world, to such a tumbledown old place as Lorrimer Tower?—you, the greatest sybarite in all London!"

"Well, I am glad of that," replied Walter Grey, with a grunt of satisfaction; "but where are you going to put up, then?"

"I have written to my bailiff, who lives here—no doubt he will expect us; but remember, if you find it dull, old man, you must take the yacht and go on where you like for a few days, for I really want to see a little of this unproductive property of mine, and I must stop here for a little while. I'll join you where you like; but I don't suppose there will be much for you to do here."

"No; doesn't look like it certainly," grumbled the other. "No shooting, no fishing, no occupation of any kind. Why don't you sell the blessed place for what it will fetch?"

"Would if I could—if I couldn't, how could I?" laughed Jack. "The whole property is entailed, and I can't sell an acre of it—worse luck! But here we are in the bay. Let the anchor go," he shouted to the skipper, "and boat, as quick as you can!"

And within a very few minutes Lord Lorrimer set foot for the first time in his life upon the little northern property from which he derived his title.

Mr. Walter Grey, his chosen friend, whose temper was never of the sweetest, landed by his side in a state of considerable discomposure.

He had been very anxious to sleep on the yacht, but his friend, from some, to his mind, sentimental idea of wishing to stay upon his own property, had insisted upon spending the nights as well as the days on shore.

Walter Grey thought they would be desperately uncomfortable anywhere on the place.

As he cared for his creature comforts above everything else on earth, he considered the whole expedition to be an arrant piece of folly.

He was secretly rejoiced, therefore, when upon walking up the narrow village street to the substantial stone house belonging to Mr. Murdoch, the bailiff, they found that they were evidently not expected in the least.

The youth, half clerk, half servant, who opened the door in answer to their knock, informed them that Mr. Murdoch was away.

"Away! but surely he must have had a letter from me—an important letter!" said his lordship, who of course was utterly unknown to the youth at the door.

"Maybe, sir; his letters have been lying here some days, and I'm waiting for his address to forward them to him. Perhaps you would like to walk in, sir, and see if yours is amongst them."

Lord Lorrimer did walk in.

There, sure enough, lay not only one—but three letters from himself!

"How long has Mr. Murdoch been away, and where has he gone to?" he inquired, with some sharpness.

"He has been away about three weeks; he is in Ireland fishing, I believe; he was to send his address, but I suppose he has forgotten to write. He is mostly away at this time of the year."

"Oh, indeed! but has he not work to attend to—rents to collect?"

"Oh, I collect the rents!" answered the youth, candidly. "Mr. Murdoch—he don't trouble himself much about things—everything is mostly left to me to look after."

"Really! that is very interesting!" said Lord Lorrimer.

"We can't possibly stop here!" whispered Walter Grey, with ill-concealed glee. "We shall have to go back on the yacht."

"I shall do nothing of the kind. I shall find myself a lodging of some kind in the village," answered his friend, quickly.

"But my dear fellow, you can't expect me——"

"No, no, of course not, Walter. You go back to the yacht and take her round anywhere you like—go up to Greenock if you like, and I will join you there in a week's time; but stay here I must! Do you not see that I am paying two hundred pounds a year to a gentleman to look after my property who spends his time chiefly in travelling about for his own pleasure, whilst my work is done by this raw, ignorant youth? These things want looking into, Walter. I feel that I must set to work seriously to alter all this. But of course I don't want to victimize you, Walter. You take the yacht, and be at Greenock this day week, and I'll write there and tell you when I can join you. You'll have a fair wind and a good sail, and you can get some good sea-fishing by the way."

"Well, thanks, Jack; I think that is the best thing I can do, so I'll be off at once."

The friends shook hands and parted, Mr. Grey going off rapidly towards the shore, feeling highly satisfied with the way things had in the end arranged themselves.

This confabulation had taken place outside the bailiff's house.

As his friend departed, Jack turned round again to the youth.

"Is there anywhere, my young friend, where I can put up for a day or two—is there a room here?"

The youth, Allen Hale by name, shook his head.

"I should not like to say, sir; you see you are a stranger," he said, rather inquiringly.

"Oh, I am an old friend of Mr. Murdoch's," said Jack, hurriedly; "but of course I can't take possession of his house. But is there an inn or a lodging of any kind to be got in the village?"

"No, I'm afraid not: but here comes the parson, no doubt he could help you if you asked him."

An elderly gentleman, evidently a clergyman, was just coming out of a cottage higher up the street.

"That's Mr. Maxwell, the parson, sir; you'd best go to him."

And Allen, glad, perhaps, to be rid of the stranger, beat a hasty retreat into the master's office.

Lord Lorrimer went forward to meet the clergyman, raising his cap as he did so.

"I am a stranger, sir, and I have come to see Mr. Murdoch to find that he is away; could you be kind enough to tell me where I could get a lodging for a few nights?"

"You are a friend of Mr. Murdoch's, sir?" inquired the clergyman, and Lorrimer fancied that he eyed him rather suspiciously.

"Well, hardly a friend," he hastened to explain. "My father knew him well. I had offered myself as his guest on the strength of this old acquaintance, though I can hardly call myself his friend."

"I am glad of that, sir," answered Mr. Maxwell, gravely, "for Mr. Murdoch is no favorite of mine; but as you are a stranger I shall be happy to put you up at the vicarage. You have your bag, I see; will you follow me?"

Lorrimer was profuse in his expressions of gratitude, and felt that he was really in luck to have fallen in with this amiable and hospitable old gentleman.

As they drew near to the vicarage—a substantial white house embowered in a shady and flowery garden, Mr. Maxwell suddenly asked him a very embarrassing question:—

"I have a daughter, sir, and might I ask you your name, that I may know who I shall have the honor of introducing to her."

Not for the world would Lorrimer have told his real name, nor have revealed to his simple and kindly old host that he was his landlord.

A moment of wildest confusion of mind ensued, and then he blurted out, desperately:—

"Oh! certainly; my name is Lester—John Lester."

Mr. Maxwell seemed perfectly satisfied, and they entered the vicarage garden.

A cool green lawn shaded by lime-trees, a bower of roses and clematis, and a plashing fountain fringed with feathery ferns in the centre, by the side of which, like some lovely water-nymph, stood a very beautiful girl—that is what met Lord Lorrimer's eyes as he entered the vicarage garden.

Dora Maxwell was, even to eyes that had been satiated with the loveliness of the most beautiful women of the great world of London and Paris, a most exquisitely perfect creature.

She was dark, with great eyes full of tenderness and passion, and soft, dusky hair that crowned her smooth white brow with a fringe of natural curls.

Her features were regular, and her color bright and clear.

Her figure was graceful and slight, and her foot and hand were faultless.

Lorrimer was a critical judge, but he could not detect one flaw in her.

She had one more charm than is generally possessed by beautiful women—that of absolute unconsciousness.

She did not know that she was better-looking than other women.

No man had ever told her so, and her smile was as sweet and as simple as a child's, and her whole manner entirely free from the artificial self-consciousness that goes far to mar the attractiveness of many pretty women.

She welcomed the guest whom her father introduced to her simply and kindly, and without a sign of embarrassment.

Lorrimer, as he bowed to her, thanked Heaven devoutly that Walter Grey was gone; he could not be thankful enough, and the sight of his little yacht speeding away swiftly over the blue waters of the distant sea was a source of unfeigned satisfaction to him.

What a wonderful treasure!—what a pearl of great price he had lighted upon here in this remote and desolate corner of the world!

Before lunch was half ended he was over head and ears in love with his beautiful hostess.

And then there came a word from her lips that was a dash of cold water over him.

He asked the Vicar much about the people and their condition.

The people it appeared were in a bad way; they were poor and were hardly used; their rents had been raised, and their houses allowed to fall into ruins.

Mr. Murdoch was self-evidently a hard and unprincipled man; he had ground down the tenants committed to his care, and had taken care to feather his own nest in the doing of it.

"What a pity," said Lorrimer, meekly, "that Lord Lorrimer is not aware of what is going on!"

"Pity!" exclaimed Dora, with flashing eyes and heightened color—"it is a wicked, burning shame!"

"But he does not know," said her guest, feeling rather uncomfortable; "if he had any idea of what has been going on here he would be indignant—at least, I feel sure he would be indignant——"

"He ought to know, Mr. Lester," said Mr. Maxwell, gravely, "a landlord ought not to remain in ignorance of what goes on on his property."

"But," pleaded Lorrimer, "perhaps he has never had the opportunity of finding out."

"Opportunity!" cried Dora; "do not speak of it in that way. He ought to have made the opportunity. How wicked a man must be who has never been near the people for whose happiness he is responsible, and whose welfare has been committed to his keeping. Oh, do not let us speak of Lord Lorrimer, Mr. Lester! I confess I lose my temper whenever his name is mentioned."

"But surely——"

Dora held up her hand.

"If you had seen all the suffering and sorrow amongst these poor people that I have—all owing to their being left, without redress to the tender mercies of a tyrant like Mr. Murdoch—you would understand that there can be no excuse for him. Lord Lorrimer is a very bad man!"

A moment of silence. Lord Lorrimer went on eating his roast mutton, with his eyes fixed on his plate; but he felt as if every mouthful would choke him.

"My daughter is right," said the Vicar, presently. "A man who can spend his life in forgetfulness of his duties cannot be a good man."

"Why don't you write to him, Mr. Maxwell?" said the guest. "If you were to say all that to him, he would do anything you ask him; he is not a bad fellow really, only he has never thought about it, you see."

"You know him, Mr. Lester?" exclaimed Dora, suddenly. "You know Lord Lorrimer?"

Then Jack blushed up to the very roots of his hair.

"No: at least only a little—very slightly. I have not seen him lately—at least——"

And then, having got himself deeper and deeper into the mire, he came to a dead stop, and began drinking the home-brewed beer by his side to hide his utter confusion.

Well, they did not say anything more about Lord Lorrimer then, but what had been said sank very deeply into Jack's mind.

He was quite certain that he could never reveal his own identity to his host, and yet, as the days went by, he was also quite certain that unless Dora Maxwell became his wife he would remain unwedded to his dying day.

Yet how was he to woo her—he himself the Earl of Lorrimer, whom she had called a very bad man?

A week passed away, and he felt no inclination to join the "Azalea" at Greenock, neither had he even summoned up resolution to write to Walter Grey, and tell him when he intended to do so.

He walked about among the green hills, and visited the people, and made their acquaintance, and flattered himself that he was studying the character and disposition of his tenants before making himself known to them.

In reality, the character and disposition of the clergyman's daughter was the chief subject of his study—for Dora was always with him, and Dora was in dreamland.

No man, young, handsome, and well-read as was Mr. Lester, had ever come into her life before; no man had ever sought her society, or seemed to be so happy in her presence as this man was.

The incense of his unspoken admiration—the worship of eyes that looked things that his lips did not utter—stole upon her with a sweet and delightful fascination.

In happy weeks of long rambles over the hills, of impromptu picnics by shady, brawling streams, or in the deep upland woods that lay between the fern-clad ravines, Dora Maxwell lost her heart to the handsome stranger who had come, from Heaven knew where across the sea, to the lonely village on the northern coast.

She loved him, and she hardly knew it; only she was happy with a vague, sweet joy, to which she had never yet given a name.

And one day they they took a little lunch-basket with them, and went off early in the morning to Lorrimer Tower.

It was an expedition that Dora had been anxious to make for some days; and Jack, too, had been secretly desirous to go there.

It lay four miles away from the vicarage across the hills.

They walked all the way.

The house, when they came to it, was but a tumbledown old place, although it stood well and imposingly on the edge of the cliffs facing the sea, and high moors sheltered it to the north, and there were fine old gardens, now all run wild and left desolate, on the southern slopes to the right of the house.

An old woman opened the door to them, and they wandered alone about the empty and deserted house. The rooms were good and lofty, but the paper was falling off the walls, and the gilding and paint were peeling away from the ceilings.

Dora led Jack through the house, explaining and showing him everything; from a child she had been here often and often, and she knew every corner of the house by heart.

This was the dining-room, and this Lady Lorrimer's boudoir, and that the picture-gallery, and here was the great ballroom, where nearly a century ago a great entertainment had been given to the Prince Regent.

"And is it not a pity," said Dora, "that such a dear old place like this is left to fall to pieces, with nobody to live in it or care for it?"

"Will Lord Lorrimer—that bad man—come and live here?" asked Jack. They were standing together in one of the win-

dows of Lady Lorrimer's boudoir, looking out over the ruined rose-garden.

"Oh, no! that is not likely."

"Would you like to live here Dora?"

She looked up quickly with a little flush as he said her name.

"Me? Oh, yes, dearly, were such a thing possible!"

"Would you really? Would you like to have the place all done up and refurnished, and the gardens all filled with flowers, and to live here always near your father and among your own people?" He spoke eagerly, with his dark eyes fixed earnestly upon her lovely face.

Dora laughed.

"Of course I should like it; but how foolish! as if I could!"

And then he took her hand and drew her near to him.

"Dora, would anything make you leave your father's house and the village where you were born? Would you go away from it all with anyone you love—would you go with me, my darling?"

And then she hung her head like a red rose.

"You know I would," she said, softly. "I would go with you anywhere."

"Because you love me, Dora?" drawing her closer still.

"Yes, because I love you," she answered, simply.

Meanwhile, at Lorrimer village, four miles away, a very unexpected thing had occurred.

Mr. Murdoch, the agent, had come home. He had arrived at his own door, fuming with excitement, bearing in his hands the letters which Allen Hale had forwarded to him only two days ago.

"Where is Lord Lorrimer?" he inquired of his astonished clerk. "What has become of him, confound him—is he gone?"

"What! Who!" gasped the bewildered Allen.

"Lord Lorrimer, of course, you owl! can't you hear? Where did he go to?—didn't he come here after me? What did you tell him about me, you gaping idiot?"

"I never have even heard of Lord Lorrimer, sir!"

"Not heard? why here are letters you have forwarded to me that are ten days old, saying he is coming at once! He must have been here! Has no one been?"

Then Allen Hale turned pale and trembled.

"Oh, sir—whatever was I about? It must have been that gentleman they call Lester! I sent him to Mr. Maxwell, sir; he is staying at the vicarage now!"

Then Mr. Murdoch strode off rapidly through the village. He met the good Vicar at his own door, just going forth on a round of parochial visits.

"I understand that Lord Lorrimer is staying here, Mr. Maxwell," blurted out Mr. Murdoch, without a word of further greeting.

"Lord Lorrimer!" repeated the clergyman. "You must be dreaming, Mr. Murdoch! I have never heard a word about Lord Lorrimer!"

"Well, my clerk Hale declares he came to my house, and that he sent him to you more than a week ago, and that he is staying with you now!"

"Mr. Murdoch, Allen Hale must be gone mad!" began the Vicar; then suddenly he stopped short and struck his hand upon his forehead—the truth burst upon him! "Great Heavens! it must be Lester! Ah! what a blind idiot I have been—and he is with my daughter now!"

All at once all the little day-dreams the good old man had been dreaming about his daughter's future happiness fell to the ground with a terrible crash! for John Lester might have been much to her, but what could the Earl of Lorrimer be to Dora Maxwell?

"Where is he?" cried Mr. Murdoch, at his elbow distractedly. "Good Heavens, sir, this may cost me my place! Can you imagine anything so unlucky as my happening to be away the very time his lordship happens to drop upon us after all these years? I hope, Mr. Maxwell, you will put in a word for me, and say how very rare an occurrence it is for me to be away! For pity's sake let us go and find him at once—it may just be my ruin! I shall lose my place!"

"And what is your place to me, Mr. Murdoch?" retorted the clergyman, wildly; "you talk about ruin to you—what is that compared to the ruin that may be hanging over me? Do you understand that this unprincipled scoundrel whom I have been harboring under my roof unknown was not a name has been making love to my daughter? And I, poor blind idiot that I am, have taken him as an honest upright suitor; whereas, as Lord Lorrimer, he can only have been trifling with my child, and leading her on to ruin—for what better can we expect from such a bad man?"

"Where are they?" gasped Mr. Murdoch, thinking of his own terrors, but making common cause with Mr. Maxwell against their common foe.

"They have gone to Lorrimer Tower—let us follow them—there is not a moment to be lost! I must save my child from this man!"

Without a word more the two men set off together, and were soon striding across the hills side by side, at a good swinging pace, in the direction of Lorrimer Tower.

* * * * * *

Mr. Lester and Miss Maxwell were very comfortable, still in the deep window embrasure of the boudoir, when, with a crash, the door flew open, and Mr. Murdoch and the Vicar rushed into the room.

"My lord, I deeply regret that my absence—" began the agent, breathlessly.

"My lord, take your hands off my daughter!" said the clergyman, furiously.

Dora lifted her head and looked up with startled eyes at her lover.

"Hush!" whispered the young man, and held the girl's trembling form still closer to his heart. "Mr. Murdoch kindly leave the room. I will settle my business with you later, and it will not take me long to do so."

Mr. Murdoch went out.

"And now, Mr. Maxwell, forgive me the little trick I have played upon you, for the sake of this dear girl whose love John Lester has been fortunate enough to win."

"But, my lord——"

"Oh! are you really Lord Lorrimer?" gasped poor Dora, trembling.

"Yes, darling, really; and if your father will not mind such a black sheep as a son-in-law, we will do up this old place and live here, and you shall make your people happy in your own way, and we will see if we cannot alter all that has been amiss here hitherto."

"Lord Lorrimer, I have done you an injustice; if my girl loves you——" began the clergyman.

"I am afraid it is too late for her to unsay it now," said Jack, with a happy smile. "Having owned to loving John Lester, how can she retract her promise to Jack Lorrimer, although he certainly is such a very bad man?"

But Dora never called him that again.

Nameless.

BY D. KER.

SHE stood in the stormy twilight, the swollen waters running swiftly beneath her bare feet.

Her dusk eyes were fixed intently upon some object lower down the stream.

A little stray lamb was closely clasped in her arms.

They called her Kelpie; nothing else, for the slim, lithe-limbed, lustrous-eyed maiden had no claim to any other name.

One mid-winter night, when the snow lay white and heavy on the surrounding hills, and a bitter blast whistled through the valley in which Maplethorp nestled, the widow Buckstone, sitting comfortably in her chimney corner, was startled by a sharp rap at the door.

"Why, who can it be on such a night?" cried the widow, pushing her spectacles up on her forehead. "Run to the door quick, Tom!"

Tom obeyed.

"Who's there?" he demanded.

Only the hoarse roar of the wintry blast answered him.

"There's someone lurking about," said Tom. "I'll see what they're after."

But he stumbled over something at his feet.

It was a basket covered with a colored blanket.

"What's this?" he cried.

The colored blanket was removed, and underneath, all folded in flannels, they found a little mite of a baby.

Tom's mother held up two deprecating hands.

"It's a shame," she cried, "and I a lone widow. I won't keep it; I won't; it shall go to the poor house in the morning; now there."

Tom was silent.

But when the morrow came, and the news got abroad, and all Maplethorp came flocking in to have a look at the little foundling, Tom got behind his mother's chair, and pinched her arm.

"Mother," he whispered, when she turned round, "don't send the midget away; I shall be a big fellow soon, and I'll work for you both."

His mother nodded and smiled, but tears came to her eyes.

When Mr. Thorndyke, the minister, came with the rest, and offered to make some provision for the child, she answered with curt decision:

"I intend to keep it myself."

So the little waif remained at the small cottage, in the sunny pine woods, beyond the village of Maplethorp.

When spring came on in beauty, Mrs. Buckstone carried her little charge to the village church, and the baby was christened, the minister's wife standing as godmother.

Only Rose!

And the sweet name suited her well.

The bloom on her dusky cheeks, and the dewy carnation of her young lips, were as the very heart of that beautiful, queenly flower.

Rose was her name, but as she grew into a slim slip of a girl, everybody called her Kelpie.

Because she was such a wild, bright, defiant thing, perhaps, and had such a fondness for the water.

While other girls of her age were playing at the baby-house, Rose might be found on the shore of Cedar Creek, launching her miniature boats amid the shallows, wading in the cool water, with bare, brown feet, as exquisite in form as a sculptor's model, or swinging in the fork of an overhanging willow, watching the wild ducks as they sailed down stream.

"She's an out-an'-out Kelpie," said old Hawks, the Maplethorp miller, and from that hour the name clung to her.

Tom made good his promise, and worked hard and willingly for his mother and her adopted child.

There came a time, though, when the little slumbering town was too small for Tom.

His growing capacities called for some wider field of action.

Where there is a will, there is generally a way open.

A fine opportunity came up, and Tom availed himself of it at once.

But it required a severe wrench to tear himself away from Maplethorp, and the little cottage under the shelter of the pine woods.

"Kelpie, I'm going," he said, when he had parted with his mother.

The girl was driving her lambs into their fold.

She turned round and faced him.

"I'm going," repeated Tom, standing up straight and handsome, a wistful expression in his resolute gray eyes, "but I shall come back, Kelpie."

The girl stood like a statue.

"Shall I find you here at the old cottage?" he went on. "Will you wait, Kelpie, and have a welcome for me?"

A slight quiver stirred her red lips, but she looked at him with shy, almost defiant eyes.

"I cannot promise," was all she said.

A shadow of pain crossed the young man's eager face.

He made a step forward, and caught her two hands.

"You are cruel," he cried. "You know how I love you——"

"Stop," she commanded, freeing herself of his grasp; "I will not hear another word. You have been kind and good to me all my life, and I am not ungrateful; let that suffice. Go you your way, and leave me to mine."

Tom drew a deep breath.

His eyes flashed.

"You prefer someone else," he said, bitterly. "If it were young Doctor Talcott asking you for your promise, you would answer him quite differently, I'll warrant."

"If you think so, well and good," she made answer, and turning from him, followed her lambs to pasture.

Years came and went.

Kelpie grew up to womanhood, straight as a dart, and graceful as a young willow.

There was not a young man in Maplethorp who would not have risked life and limb for a smile from from her shy, red lips, or a glance of favor from her luminous dusk eyes.

But she kept them all at a distance, even young Talcott.

There came, as time sped on, a spring afternoon wild with mad storm and rain.

The valley was deluged, and the mad winds tossed and bent the pines, and tore off the branches of the maples.

"I must see that the lambs are folded," said Kelpie, as the twilight drew near.

"You'd better stay in doors, and let the creatures shift for themselves," said the widow, from the chimney corner.

But Kelpie had a will of her own, and went out into the storm.

A little later she looked in.

"The house lamb is missing," she said; "I'm going to find it."

"Nay, nay!" cried the widow, "you must not think of it. Ten to one it has strayed beyond the creek. Let it alone."

"The water is rising rapidly, and it may perish. It is a poor, little stray lamb, too," said the girl, her bright eyes softening. "I raised it myself; I cannot leave it to die."

Maplethorp was fast closed against the storm, not a creature to be seen in the streets.

Beyond, in the ravine in which the creek ran, the gale had been fearful.

Kelpie went resolutely on, calling her lost lamb in a clear, high voice, that rang even above the clamor of the storm.

And at last, away up amid the laurel cliffs, a plaintive cry answered her; and at the foot of an old pine she found her lamb.

She caught it up with a hushed cry of delight, and turned her face homeward.

Twilight was falling, and the rising waters were all about her feet.

She went on carefully, picking her way, leaping lightly from rock to rock, the wind tossing her unbound hair.

A sound of trampling hoofs, and directly a man's voice, in imperative command, reached her from below. Standing on the slippery rocks, the swift-flowing waters beneath her, one hand resting upon a rough boulder, the other grasping her lamb, she peered down the surging stream.

There was a horseman at the lower ford, making vain efforts to cross.

The horse reared and backed, evidently frightened at the swollen stream.

But his rider urged him on, with whip and spur, and at last he went in, with a wild leap.

Plunging furiously, he gained the opposite shore, but with such a frantic bound, that his rider was thrown from the saddle.

The horse galloped off in the direction of Maplethorp, but his master lay motionless.

Kelpie, looking on breathlessly, uttered a low cry, and still clasping her lamb, darted over the rocks, and down the shore of the creek.

Before she reached him, or looked into his death-like face, some subtle voice within told her it was Tom.

There he lay, his right arm doubled under him, the sharp edge of a rock piercing his temple.

Kelpie raised his head to her bosom, and held it there for an instant, as a fond mother might hold her babe; then, with an unspoken prayer on her ashen lips, she caught up her lamb, and darted off through the falling darkness, with the speed of a swallow.

Help came in a very short time, and the injured man was placed on a litter, and borne across the valley to his mother's cottage.

"He is not dead?" said Kelpie, confronting Doctor Talcott, when the brief examination was over.

The young man looked at the lovely, dusk face, pallid with suspense and agony; and in that minute he understood why it was that Kelpie had turned a deaf ear to all his ardent wooing.

"No, he is not dead," he answered, his eyes softening with pity.

"I will save his life for your sake."

It was after midnight when Tom recovered consciousness.

"Where is Kelpie?" were his first words.

"You mustn't talk" said his mother. But he silenced her with a gesture.

"Call Kelpie!"

And the girl came.

He took her hand in his left one; his right lay bandaged and disabled by his side.

"I was coming to bring you good news," he said, a slight quiver stirring his firm lips; "that's what brought me. Kelpie, I have found your friends. You are no longer a waif. The man who put you at my mother's door, is dead. I saw him die, and heard his confession. You stood between him and a great fortune, and he wanted you out of the way. He is dead, and the fortune is yours, and your mother will be in Maplethorp to-morrow to claim you."

The dark, southern face grew fairly dazzling, in its exceeding joy.

"Oh! thank God! thank God!" she said.

A shadow of intense pain filled Tom's eyes.

"How glad you are," he said.

"Yes, I am glad, very glad, Tom."

"Then I'll try and be glad for your sake," he answered, hoarsely, and turned his face away.

Silence fell.

The clock ticked on the mantel, and the cat purred before the hearth.

Kelpie stood irresolute, great tears standing in her eyes.

At last she stole to the bedside, and her slender, brown hand, which had never touched Tom's only with the shy, coy touch of a bird, fell softly upon his bandaged head.

He opened his eyes with a great start.

"Kelpie?"

"Yes, Tom."

Again there was silence.

"Tom," the girl began, at last, her starry eyes downcast, her red lips quivering, "Tom, you remember the morning we parted, out yonder by the sheep-fold?"

"Yes, I remember."

"You asked me for a promise then——"

"And you refused it wisely enough."

"Tom," and the soft fluttering hand touched his forehead again, "if you have not changed your mind, ask me again, ask me now!"

All bruised and bandaged as he was, the young fellow struggled up.

"Why, Kelpie, you don't mean——"

"Ask me, and you shall see, Tom."

Something in her downcast face gave him courage. He caught the fluttering hand, and held it fast.

"Ask you now, Rose? Oh, you know how I love you. I have loved you my whole life long. I shall love you till my dying day. But Rose——"

"Do you want my promise, Tom?"

"Want it? I would die for it, Kelpie!"

She extended her other hand, and looked up at him, all her woman's heart in her shy eyes.

"Then it is yours, Tom.

"When you asked me before, I was nameless. I couldn't bear to think I might bring you shame some day—but, thank God, all that is past—I am——"

"You are what you always have been to me, Rose, the sweetest, purest creature God ever made; but you forget, child, your mother comes to-morrow, and you are an heiress——"

"I forget nothing, Tom; if I were the queen on her throne, I should say the same thing. I am yours, if you really want me."

THE OLDEST TREE.—The oldest tree in existence, so far as can be discovered, is the Botree of the sacred city of Anuradpoora, in Burmah. It is said to have been planted no long ago as 288 B. C., and, supposing this to be correct, it is, therefore, now 2,170 years old. Sir James Tennent, in giving reasons for believing that the tree is really of this wonderful age, refers to historical documents in which it is mentioned at different dates, as 182 A. D., 223 A. D., and so on up to the present day. There is a belief that this venerable tree is a branch of the identical fig-tree under which Buddha reclined at Uruvelaya, and hence the reason why even kings have sometimes dedicated to it their dominions. Its leaves are carried away as relics by pilgrims, but, the tree being considered too sacred to touch with a knife, they are only allowed to be gathered when they fall. The King Oak in Windsor Forest is only 1,000 years old.

"DEAR me!" cried Mrs. Blossom, as she laid down the paper, "it does seem to me as if these state militia fellows are always in trouble. Here's an account of a recent inspection where the company turned out 58 men. Too bad, ain't it?"

Important.

Philadelphians arriving in New York via Cortlandt Street Ferry by taking the 6th Avenue Elevated Train corner Church and Cortlandt Streets, can reach the Grand Union in 42d Street opposite Grand Central Depot in five minutes, and save $3 Carriage Hire. Travellers to Saratoga or other Summer resorts by Grand Central Depot, and Baggage can be transferred from Hotel to Depot, free. 600 Elegantly furnished rooms $1, and upwards per day. Restaurant the best and cheapest in the City. Families can live better for less money at the Grand Union, than at any other first class hotel in the city.

Our Young Folks.

CAUGHT IN A TRAP.

BY BLAKE PAXSON.

WHEN I was a little girl, I was full of fun, as all little children who are well and happy ought to be; and my principal play-fellow was only a dog.

A dear good faithful dog he was, too, and quite worthy of his name Fido, as you will see.

I don't think I was more tiresome than other children, but I did so dislike school.

One morning I went down to breakfast full of gloe.

"Mother, I cant go to school to-day, for I've sneezed six times already, and I'm sure I have a cold in my head; I need'nt go, need I?"

Mother was reading a letter and looked worried; but I was too eager to get my holiday to care much for that.

"Say I need'nt, mother," I repeated, making queer little noises in my throat to show how bad my cold was.

"Very well dear; don't tease me just now."

This was quite enough for me; I settled down to my bread and milk, and forgot all about my cold as I made plans for enjoying my holiday.

Presently mother looked up from her letter, and I saw the tears were in her eyes.

"What's the matter, mother?" I asked.

"Your Aunt Emily is very ill, and I must go and see her. Make haste with your breakfast, or you will be late for school.

"Oh, mother you said I need not go," I said; "you know I have a cold."

"I was'nt thinking, dear child, when I spoke, and really did not hear what you said. Your aunt is so ill that I must go to her at once, and I must take nurse with me; so it will be better for you to go to school.

I believe I told you I was a very tiresome child, but I am afraid you will think I was very naughty indeed, for I stamped my foot at poor mother, and actually declared that I would not go to school.

Just then the nurse came in.

"Oh, fie, Miss Amy! she cried, "you'll be late for school, and you've made your mother cry; come and be dressed at once."

I had to submit, and was led off by Alice, the housemaid, after saying "Good-bye" to mother in a very sulky tone.

As we went down the main street, she saw a cap in a window which took her fancy.

"Do you mind coming in, miss?" Alice asked. "It is such a pretty cap, and it may be gone when I come back.

"I'll wait outside," I said.

Of course I ought not to have done that, for I was only seven years old, and mother never allowed me to go out alone.

But you see when once we got out of temper, we don't mind what we do, and so I thought to myself.

"I don't care; perhaps someone will run away with me, and then mother will be punished for sending me to school."

So she went in and took Fido with her, and I really meant to wait.

But I had put myself in the way of temptation, as you will see.

A little lower down the road there was a second-hand furniture shop full of all sorts of odds and ends.

There was a long oak chest with the lid standing a little apart, and I thought what a bit of fun it would be to get in and hide.

Alice would of course look for me, and then, when the time had passed for me to go to school, I would pop out suddenly and astonish her.

I looked up and down the road.

There was no one in sight but an errand-boy, who was quite close to me, and I felt sure he would not tell, so I got in.

"Down she goes!" cried that tiresome boy, and shut the lid with a bang.

The noise seemed almost to split my head open, but when I had recovered the fright, I lay still and listened for Alice's step.

I thought it would be a fine game to push up the lid and spring out of the box.

I had room to turn round, but not to sit up, so I rolled over and had a good look at my hiding place.

Of course it was dark, but there were several small holes which seemed just like tiny stars; and it was fortunate for me that those stars were there.

I lay as quiet as a mouse, expecting Alice every moment, but still I heard no footstep.

I did not know that the chest was so thick that it was only when any one came quite close that I could hear.

At last I heard a man's voice.

"That's it. The lid was open, but some mischievous boy must have shut it. The master's got the key, so we will have to send it off just as it is, and I let the key go by post. It's ready labelled. The gentleman wants it particularly to-day. What time will you fetch it?"

"About twelve; we shall get there by two."

"All right, that will do; only don't forget for it's very particular. Now then doggie go away; there is'nt anything in there for you to bark at."

I knew the bark well, it was dear Fido, who had found me out.

I trembled all over, and turned first hot and then cold, while the men were talking; yet I was too frightened to speak.

I thought they would punish me for being on their premises, and I was sure that I could easily get out when I liked.

When they had moved away, and all was silent again, I ventured to arch my back up a bit to see if I could push the lid open and get out before they returned.

I might as well have tried to lift an elephant.

I began to cry bitterly; not loudly, you know, for I was still afraid of being found out, but quietly, bitterly, till I was wearied out and could cry no longer.

I suppose I must have fallen asleep at last, for I awoke with a start.

My prison was being carried. I gasped for breath and cried, "Let me out," but just as I spoke we were dropped with a thump which bruised every bone in my body.

There was a loud cry of "All right," and then a violent jolting told me that we were in a carrier's cart.

Suddenly I heard a welcome sound: it was Fido's well-known bark, and he began scratching at the roof of my prison.

We went on for some time, when the cart stopped, and I heard the driver tell Fido to get down, then I cried

"Please let me out! do let me out quick!"

"Who are you?" he asked.

"Amy," I cried, thumping the chest with all my might; "let me out."

"Are you in here?" he asked, tapping my prison with his knuckles.

"Yes."

"Who put you there?"

"I got in myself; but a boy shut the lid down. Do please let me out."

"It's all very well to say that, but where's the key? I can't go back to where we came from now, and we are only half-way to the place we're bound for."

"Can't you break the lid open?" I ventured to ask. "I think I shall choke if I stay here."

"Well, you see, I dare'at break the lock. You just lie still and try to get a nap, and I'll drive as fast as I can. I hav'ent many other packages to leave besides yours" Then he burst into a merry laugh. "Excuse me laughing, dear," he said, "but it seems strange to be taking a live parcel. Your doggie is here still, so you won't feel dull, and I'll go drive on. The sooner we are off, the sooner we shall get there."

I tried to be patient, but you can't think how long that drive seemed, or how terrible the jolting was.

Over and over again I wished I was in Miss Page's room, doing sums and grammar.

The longest lane turns at last, and I could have jumped for joy, if there had been room enough, when the cart stopped again, and the kind driver came round.

"Here we are, and I don't think I ever did the journey so fast. Now we'll see if the gentleman has some tools."

Fido barked, and pattered about over my head, as if impatient to get me out.

"Doggie! dear doggie!" I cried and then he frisked about all the more, little knowing that every step he took seemed to be on my brain.

They carried me carefully into the house; then tools were brought, and although every knock seemed to go through my head, no music has ever sounded sweeter to me since, for every stroke brought me nearer to liberty and home.

The lid was raised, and two children clapped their hands as I sprang up like Jack-in-the-box; then I threw my arms around dear Fido, and went into hysterics.

When I was better, I told my story to the kind gentleman and his wife, while the carrier and the children stood by, and listened as eagerly as if I were telling a fairy tale.

It seemed to amuse them but it certainly had not amused me much.

"And now what is to be done with you," said Mr. Jordan, looking at his watch. "It is nearly two o'clock, and you have been missing since half past nine. I will telegraph to your mother. You shall have some dinner here, and then I will take you home."

"No, no! please don't send a telegram to mother," I cried. "It would frighten her so. If you will let me go at once, I shall be home before tea; only I don't know my way," I added sobbing bitterly again.

Fido licked my hands, and said, "Don't cry," as plainly as any dog could; then he ran across the room to the carrier, and pulled at his coat.

"All right old boy," said the man, "I understand. If you please sir, I think I'd better take missie back with me. I shan't be more than two hours and a half leaving my parcels and getting back, and I'll start the moment the horse's had a feed."

So we started for home after we all had some dinner, and I should quite have enjoyed the drive if I had not felt ashamed of all my naughtiness.

I need hardly say I never played truant again, and if my lessons seemed dry and difficult, I used to think that there was something worse than they were, namely, being shut up for four hours in a wooden chest.

SING A SONG FOR SIXPENCE.—You all know this rhyme; but have you ever read what it is meant for? The four-and-twenty blackbirds represent the twenty-four hours. The bottom of the pie is the world, while the top crust is the sky that over-arches it. The opening of the pie is the day dawn when the birds begin to sing and surely such a sight is fit for a king? The king who is represented as sitting in his parlor counting out his money, is the sun, while the gold pieces that slip through his fingers as he counts them, are the golden sunshine. The queen who sits in the dark kitchen, is the moon, and the honey with which she regales herself is the moonlight. The industrious maid who is in the garden at work before the king—the sun—has risen, is day-dawn, and the clothes she hangs out are the clouds, while the bird who so tragically ends the song by "nipping off her nose," is the hour of sunset.

A MAN of the world may have enough of the world to sink him; but he can never have enough to satisfy him.

THE "BLAZED TREE."

BY E. P. SPENCER.

I AM an old miner.

Not one of the now-a-day Washoe and Nevada stripe, but an old forty-nine Californa miner. I have been engaged in all descriptions of mining transactions, except the now-fangled one of mining stock in companies—"feet," I believe they call it. Among my varied undertakings was one operation in a tunnel in which I and my partners engaged in the summer of 1852.

One afternoon in that year, as I was carrying up a bucket of water from the river to our tent at the top of the bank, my foot caught under a large stone, and my perpendicular was at once changed to a horizontal posture, while the water from the overturned bucket spread itself in various directions.

With a few expletives of rather forcible character quite customary and common in that region and period, I raised myself up to my feet again, and picking up my bucket was about to retrace my steps to the river, when my attention was attracted by a folded paper which had been placed under the stone causing my fall.

When my foot tripped, the stone was overturned, and the paper in letter form, lay exposed to view.

Bending over I picked it up and proceeded to examine it.

It was written in pencil in characters very irregular and stiffly formed as if made by a person with a wounded hand. The contents were as follows:

"If this letter should fall into the hands of any person, I wish to inform them that I have been attacked and mortally wounded by my two partners, who wished to obtain my money. Failing to discover it, after wounding me, they have fled, leaving me here to die. Whoever gets this letter will find, buried in a ravine at the foot of a blazed tree, twenty-five paces due north of this, a bag containing five thousand dollars in gold dust. That it may prove more fortunate property to him than it has to me, is the hope of— ANDREW FORREST."

I stood for some minutes after reading the letter like one awakened from a dream.

I could not convince myself that the letter in my hand was a genuine document, and read it over and over again, thinking I might get some clue from the handwriting to the real author.

It might be a trick got up by my partners to raise a laugh at my expense.

No: the place where it was found, and the purely accidental discovery, rendered such a surmise very improbable.

I sat down on a log, and turned the matter over and over in my mind for some time.

At last I got up, and pacing off the required distance in the direction mentioned in the letter, I came to a large tree.

Carefully examining it I discovered a scar clearly indicating that the tree had been "blazed" at no remote period.

This was "confirmation strong as proofs of Holy Writ"; and I immediately went to work to discover the locality of the ravine.

Here I was at fault. Nothing of the kind was to be seen.

To all appearance a stream of water never had passed in the neighborhood of the tree.

This was not encouraging; and I sat down on the ground and read the letter again, to see if I had not mistaken some of its directions.

No; I was in the right place; but where was the ravine.

A tap on the shoulder aroused me from my meditations, and, on looking, up, I saw my two partners, who loudly abused me for having neglected the preparations for their supper.

As an excuse, I showed them the letter, and detailed the manner of finding it.

To my surprise, they were as much excited by its perusal as I had been, and we all looked around perseveringly for the ravine, but without effect for some time.

At last Jack Nesbitt, who had been a miner since '48, said:

"I think there has been a ravine here, but it has been filled up by the rains."

On close examination, we decided that his suspicion was correct, and after some consultation we determined that the next morning we would commence digging.

Morning came, and we repaired to the spot with pick and shovel.

Jack proposed that we should follow the course of the ravine, which appeared to run into the body of the hill, rather than dig down in any one place.

The result was, that in a few days we had formed quite a cave in the side of the hill.

We worked at this tunnel for four days without finding the bag.

On the fourth day, Jack proposed that he and my other partner, Bill Jennings, should carry the dirt down to the river and wash it, leaving me to dig in the tunnel.

In that way, they thought, we might at least "make grub," while searching for the hidden money.

I thought the idea foolish; but, as they had entered so eagerly into my views regarding the buried bag of dust, I made no objection to the plan, and dug away with redoubled energy.

In fact, I had thought so much about the object of our search, that I had become utterly regardless of anything else.

I had dreamt of it when sleeping, mused on it when waking, and it had obtained complete control of my mind.

Day after day we worked—I digging and my companions washing; yet strange to say, I did not become discouraged.

They said nothing about the bag of dust; and I asked them nothing about the result of their washing the excavated soil.

We had worked about three weeks, and had formed a tunnel extending about fifteen feet into the hill, when, on one afternoon, completely tired out, I sat down to rest in the cave.

I had only intended to sit a little while, but five minutes had not elapsed before I was fast asleep.

I was awakened by a crash, and found my feet and legs completely covered by a mass of dirt and stones.

The front part of the tunnel had fallen in, and I was in a manner buried alive.

About ten feet of the tunnel remained firm, and from my observation of its structure prior to the accident, I was convinced that I had no reason to apprehend any danger in that quarter.

My partners had carried dirt enough to the river to keep them busy there for the rest of the day: so I had nothing to hope from their assistance.

The question that first presented itself to my mind was, how long can life be sustained in this confined state?

I had read, a dozen times, statistics in relation to the amount of air consumed hourly by a human being's lungs, but, like almost everybody else, had merely wondered at the time, and then forgot the figures.

How much would I have given then to have been able to recall them!

The next thought was how can I proceed to extricate myself?

This question was difficult of solution.

If I had went to work with a shovel and pick to clear away the dirt that had fallen, it was extremely likely that all which I could be able to remove would be immediately replaced by that which would fall from above.

This was pleasant! I racked my brains to devise some means of liberating myself, but without effect.

Leaning against the wall in utter despondency I was about to throw myself to the ground and await my fate, when I observed that quite a current of water on a small scale was making its way down the side of the cave.

The next moment the thought struck me that it might be turned to my advantage. Why could I not so direct it that it would wash away sufficient earth in its progress to the outlet of the cave to make an opening large enough to allow me to crawl out through it?

I accordingly cut a channel for the water to flow towards the entrance, I enlarged the opening by which the stream entered the cave, and was delighted to observe that it flowed with redoubled force.

With what eagerness did I watch to see the first opening made by the water, and I was soon gratified by observing that it flowed in a steady stream in the direction in which I had pushed the pick and shovel.

In a few minutes I discovered a faint glimmering in the distance, which might be an opening or the effect of an excited imagination, I scarcely knew which.

But the doubt soon resolved itself into certainty, and an opening some five inches in diameter speedily disclosed itself.

Larger and larger the opening grew: lump upon lump was washed away by the stream until the channel became large enough for me to place my head in and shout lustily for assistance.

Just as I was drawing my head back I caught sight of a buckskin bag.

Hastily seizing it, I found it was the one we were in search of, and which, but for the accident, I would never have found. Wishing to surprise my companions, I concealed it and redoubled my cries.

In a few minutes they came running up the hill, and soon liberated me from my unpleasant position.

"Well, Ned," said Jack, as he shook me by the hand, "I'm glad to see you're safe, old fellow—the more so as Bill and I have been deceiving you a little. You know we have been trying all the summer to get you into a tunneling operation, and you have only laughed at us."

"Yes," said I, wondering what would come next.

"Well, when you got that letter, Bill and I made up our minds that we would go into the job with you—not in the hope of finding any bag, but because we knew you would work twice as hard with such an inducement, intending, meanwhile to wash the excavated dirt.

"This we have done; and, my boy, we have never made less than three hundred dollars any day since we commenced."

"Then you think that bag a humbug, do you?"

"Why, of course" said he.

"Well, I don't; and I intend to go on tunneling," said I.

Bill and Jack conferred together awhile, and then the former said:

"Well, Ned, we might as well tell you first as last. I wrote that letter in order to go into tunneling."

"And the 'blazed tree,'" said I—"how about that? The 'blaze' is certainly two two years old."

Jack hesitated.

"Why, you see," said he, "we found that tree, and wrote the letter to suit it."

"Then what do you think of this?" I asked, showing him the bag I had found in the cave.

Jack was nonplussed.

On opening the bag we found about three thousand dollars worth of gold.

We could never ascertain anything about Mr. Forrest, so we divided the money between us.

IT will bother the inventive genius of the country to outdo the Yankee who proposed to convert water into fuel.

THE ORGANIST.

BY. W. M. A.

In the aisles of the great cathedral
The slumbering echoes woke,
But the sound was more than music,
'Twas somebody's soul that spoke.

A soul that was night in feeling,
A soul that had long been dumb,
That had borne its sorrow in silence
Till the hour for speech had come.

They were not words that it uttered,
For words are poor and cold,
And the deepest things of our nature
Are those that can ne'er be told.

'Twas a man who looked like others,
With a quiet face and calm,
And he played some beautiful music
That sounded like a psalm.

And then the notes grew quicker;
And I held my breath to hear;
There were tones of sorrow and anger,
There were tones of grief and fear.

A wonderful wild outpouring
Of grief that was near despair;
It filled the dim, dark distance,
It spoke to the shadows there.

It thundered like waves in anger,
It wailed like a frightened child;
It sobbed with a storm of falling tears,
And hushed its fury wild.

The silence was filled with sadness,
Though the music was no more,—
The echoes had caught its burden,
And told it o'er and o'er.

And before they ceased the story,
The music rose again
In the tone of one who has conquered
And triumphed over pain.

The gladness was all the stronger
For the pain that had gone before,
For it was not only gladness,
'Twas fuller, richer, more.

I would I could catch its spirit,
And in it live my life;
I wish I could hope to gain it,
The peace that comes through strife.

NATURE'S WEATHER-GLASS.

IF the weather exercises so powerful an influence upon our pursuits in the present day, how much more dependent upon its favorable disposition must have been our forebears, whose industries were almost all embraced in the harvest of land and sea?

No meteorological department, with its daily forecasts, then aided the anxious tiller of the soil; no electric messages, no barometers, no thermometers,—his labors for the day had all to be guided by his own keen observation, and such facts as rhyming weather-prophets had translated into familiar doggerel, and dear experience had confirmed.

It is, however, not amidst bricks and mortar that we must be introduced to Dame Nature.

Away where the thrushes are joyously singing in the greenwood, and the mellow note of the blackbird rises from the shelter of fragrant hawthorns, where the bees suck the nectar from the sweet-smelling woodbine, and the golden catkins of the sallow bloom on the treacherous swamp—where the tiny wren carols forth his song—there may we seek, and there shall we find, Nature reveling in her own domain.

In the early morning the sun rose from a couch of crimson drapery—ominous sign; but the sky is now intensely blue, and there is every promise of a glorious day.

The gorgeous butterflies and hoverers flit busily around the thistle heads and teazels, and the speckled starlings are probing the sward in search of food; but before long the truth of

"Evening red and morning grey,
Set the traveler on his way;
Evening grey and morning red,
Bring down rain upon his head,"

is about to be realized. Look now at the thistle heads—not a bee is to be seen; and the insect life, so abundant a minute or two ago, has vanished.

The air is overladen with the perfume of flowers, and the convolvulus has furled itself up; the rooks have not taken their accustomed flight, but glide uneasily about their elevated nests.

The spider, whose web is in a crevice of a fragment of rock, busies himself in making fast the strands of his fairy dwelling; the bright-eyed pimpernel shuts up its blossoms; and, although the blackbird is still piping away,

"If red the sun begins his race,
Be sure that rain will fall apace."

The sky grows overcast, and once more the rhymester's efforts to embody a scientific truth in popular verse is successful in the couplet:

"When clouds appear like rocks and towers,
The earth's refreshed by frequent showers."

The observer of nature draws his inferences from all the petty occurrences which ordinary people allow to pass unheeded. He takes stock of sun, clouds, winds, birds, flowers, and insects, and in their habits he finds a sure index to Nature's ever-varying mood.

The scientist condenses all these different symptoms into the statement that the barometer has fallen.

Unfortunately for their credit as weather-prophets, our ancestors went in for extensive prognostications, based entirely upon the folk-lore tradition had preserved to them.

A notable instance of this kind is the popular superstition concerning the 15th of July:

"St. Swithin's Day, if thou dost rain,
For forty days it will remain;
St. Swithin's Day, if thou be fair,
For forty days 'twill rain nae mair."

An almost equally widespread belief obtains with respect to Candlemas Day. For instance, in Germany it is said that "the shepherd would rather a wolf enter his fold on Candlemas Day than the sun."

And then, again, there is the popular Scotch rhyme:

"If Candlemas Day be dry and fair,
The half o' winter's to come, and mair;
If Candlemas Day be wet and foul,
The half o' winter's gane at Yule."

The French have also a similar quatrain, concerning St. Tiedard's Day, and others of St. Paul's and St. Vincent's, one of which runs:

"If St. Paul's Day be fair and clear,
It does betide a happy year;
But if it chance to snow or rain,
Then will be dear all kinds of grain," etc.

Upon the other hand, there is many a truth embodied in these quaint sayings, amongst which has sprung so much that is fantastic and false. This is the case in such sayings as:

"A swarm of bees in May,
Is worth a load of hay;
But a swarm in July
Is not worth a fly;"

"April showers bring May flowers," and "A bushel of March dust is worth the king's ransom."

From the foregoing it will be gathered that that never-failing source of grumpiness, the weather, has had as much attention devoted to it in times past as at present, and should one meet with a weather-wise rustic when straying through some of our remoter villages, no small amount of information on his specialty may be gathered, albeit remarkable for its antiquarian flavor.

Grains of Gold.

Victory belongs to the most persevering.

The more a person wants, the less will do him good.

Never begin a journey until breakfast has been eaten.

Better three hours too early than one minute too late.

He hath riches sufficient who hath enough to be charitable.

Who seeks a friend without a fault, remains without one.

A kindness can never be canceled—not even by repaying it.

If you would not fall into sin, do not sit by the door of temptation.

Converts who boast of their blessedness are not always the most stable.

Nothing is so credulous as vanity, or so ignorant of what becomes itself.

The most important lesson of morality is this: Never do an injury to any one.

Many have felt the lash on their backs for want of a bridle upon their tongues.

Kindness is the only charm permitted to the aged; it is the coquetry of white hair.

The hardest trial of the heart is whether it can bear a rival's failure without triumph.

Our grand business is, not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand.

To have thought far too little, we shall find, is the review of life, among our capital faults.

Silence is the safest response for all the contradiction that arises from impertinence, vulgarity or envy.

Dry ashes applied to a cut will stop the bleeding, and will, if left on a few hours, hasten the healing process.

Restraint and liberty go hand in hand in the development of character—indeed, without the former the latter is impossible.

Honest or courageous people have very little to say about either their courage or their honesty. The sun has no need to boast of its brightness, nor the moon of its effulgence.

Femininities.

Faults are thick where love is thin.

A good sculptor ought to make a model husband.

A fashion writer says that brown-eyed ladies look best in gray satin.

The Chinese woman, notwithstanding the extreme smallness of her feet, can walk fast—even run.

"This is a warm wave," said the man whose irate wife flaunted a hot fire-shovel in his face.

A Camden man says his wife is only half like a telescope. He can draw her out, but he can't shut her up.

To all mankind death is but a question of time; with womankind the length of her life is often a question of veracity.

A Jamestown man is about to fire off a lecture on "The Storm Center of the Northwest." He has been married eleven years.

"A bachelor of thirty years" writes for a recipe for bean soup. A lady correspondent replies, "Get a wife who knows how to make it."

Pugs having gone out of vogue, a San Francisco belle is starting a new fashion in pets. She has imported from British Columbia a bright Indian baby.

Girls, never allow even a lover to have his arms around you. The papers daily show that thousands of our brightest young men are going to wait.

A doctor considers tight lacing a public benefit, inasmuch as it kills off the foolish girls, and leaves the wise ones to grow into beautiful womanhood.

A youth may be firmly convinced that love is blind, but it will be just as well for him to avoid ice-cream saloons when he is out walking with his girl.

"I never was so put out in my life," as the young man remarked after landing on the sidewalk just subsequent to the appearance of the old gentleman.

Balzac says that a man who could govern a woman, could govern a nation. It is very sad to think a man like Balzac should not have been allowed a night key.

A little girl was trying to tell her mother how beautifully a certain lady could trill in singing, and said, "Oh, mamma, you ought to hear her gargle—she does it so sweetly."

A New York barber says there are lots of men in that city who have worn wigs for years without even their wives suspecting it. This would seem to indicate that New York wives are very peaceable.

The number of country girls anxious to learn dressmaking from a sharper, who gathers sixteen dollars a head and then decamps, is almost equal to the number of girls who light fires with kerosene.

No woman can be a lady who would wound or mortify another. No matter how beautiful, how refined, how cultivated she may be, she is in reality coarse, and the innate vulgarity of her nature manifests itself thus.

A lady who asserted that no one should ever have her hand in marriage except the one who should rescue her from death, was placed in a predicament on falling into the river and being brought to shore by a large Newfoundland dog.

In West Cornwall, England, women are commonly employed as painters and paper-hangers, learning the trade from each other without serving a regular apprenticeship, and following it as constantly as dressmakers or milliners pursue their calling.

The father of five marriageable daughters was in town a few days ago trying to buy some four-leaf clover seed to plant in his back yard. He said he had read that when a young girl finds a four-leaf clover, it is a sign that she will be married within a year.

"What influence has the moon on the tide?" asked the teacher; and it was the very bad boy who responded that it didn't seem to have any particular effect on the tide, but he had observed that it seemed to have considerable influence in getting them tied.

A young lady who visited Saratoga this summer has had seven marriage proposals from young men of sense and wealth since her return home. She appeared at the hotel dinner-table one day in a dress costing not over ten or twelve cents a yard.

Four-year-old is very anxious for a baby sister, and often importunes his mother to buy him one. "But," says mamma, "I haven't money enough to buy one." "Well, mamma, can't you get one and have her charged?" was the eager inquiry.

"So you are going to keep a school?" said a young lady to her old aunt. "Well, for my part, sooner than do that I would marry an old widower with nine children." "I should prefer that myself," was the reply, "but where, oh! where is the widower?"

"What is the most momentous question that has agitated the women of our country since the first blast of freedom swept over this land?" screams Lillie Devereux Blake. If you want our candid opinion, Lil, we should say it was whether they shall wear a Jersey or a Mother Hubbard.

In an action for breach of promise, the other day, in England, the defendant's counsel asked the fair plaintiff, "Did my client enter into a positive agreement to marry you?" "Well, not exactly," she replied, "but he courted me a good deal, and told my sister he intended to marry into our family."

A bachelors' society with matrimonial tendencies and provisions, has been formed in Harlem, N. Y. Only young men are eligible. They pay a monthly due of $5, and agree to remain single one year. At the end of that time any one, by giving three months' notice, may receive $2,000 on his wedding day, contributed out of the fund of the society.

News Notes.

San Francisco has summer evening schools.

Dillon, Montana, has two female faro dealers.

Paper peach baskets are being used in Maryland.

Baseball is the name of a new town in Nebraska.

Unity, N. H., has a 94-year-old treasurer, Amos Perkins.

Saginaw county, Mich., has a female deputy sheriff.

A twelve year-old girl living at Leverett, Mass., weighs 220 lbs.

Jonathan Chase, of Rhode Island, is the only Quaker in Congress.

Prairie dogs destroy $10,000,000 worth of grass in Texas every year.

In New York there are 12,800 licensed draymen and expressmen.

Governor Waller, of Connecticut, was once a New York newsboy.

"There is a frost," is the latest English of being "left out in the cold."

Of 11,000 bills introduced at the late session of Congress, only 300 passed.

Over 50,000 postoffices are required to handle the mail matter of this country.

Boston girls are all taking to violin playing, and the citizens are taking to the woods.

The handles of a Utica, N. Y., coffin pulled out and spoiled a funeral the other day.

Earrings are going out of fashion, and are not worn by the "best people" in the daytime at all.

Dr. David Ward owns over 2,000,000,000 feet of standing pine in Michigan and Wisconsin.

The Princess Louise is to execute the statue of Queen Victoria for the Lichfield Cathedral.

Bartholomew Tarney, of Bath, N. Y., walked three miles on the 100th anniversary of his birth.

St. Augustine, Florida, pays twelve and a half cents a barrel for oyster shells to improve her roads.

A distinguished Paris physician says that applesauce is equally as nourishing as oatmeal or potatoes.

A Denison, Texas, man secured an advance of twenty-five cents on his cork leg in a pawnbroker's.

Phytochromotypy is the gentle term applied to a process of producing impressions of leaves and plants.

A French chemist distills brandy from watermelon, and a Swede manufactures alcohol from reindeer moss.

Queen Victoria uses a brass bedstead in her railway sleeping carriage, and has her train lighted with gas.

The New York Home of Refuge for Discharged Convicts has in two years helped 225 men to honorable positions in life.

A young lady, Miss Benedict by name, is said to harbor the intention of attempting to swim the English Channel next month.

The estate of the late Moses Taylor, of New York, amounted to $70,000,000, and his children and grandchildren each get $5,000,000.

A pensioner at Kingston, N. H., has painted his dwelling red, white and blue, on the patriotic ground that the Government has paid for the house.

A stranger offered to drink, in a bar-room in Wadsworth, Nev., all the whisky the people present would pay for. He drank sixteen times and died.

A Pittsburg man who has accumulated six thousand dollars by quiet industry, has gone to an insane asylum because both of his babies are girls. He wanted a boy.

Mark King, of Barren county, Ky., has exhibited a section of a squash vine only eighteen inches long to which clung in natural growth nearly 100 squashes.

There is a justice of the peace in Banks county, Ga., who has held his office for eight years, and has never tried a case, always getting the litigants to compromise.

Queen Victoria has issued a command that when the Prince and Princess of Wales dine out in London the number of guests invited to meet them is not to exceed fourteen.

The project of having policemen detailed daily to weigh coal delivered to the customers at retail, and see that the full weight is given, is being agitated in San Francisco.

In Stockton, Cal., a few days ago, two policemen arrested an old man for stealing an orange. One of the policemen ate the orange, and the old man got 25 days in jail.

An entire company of the Twelfth Regiment, New York State Militia, took the pledge a few days since to abstain during life from the use of intoxicating liquor as a beverage.

Cases of delirium tremens in Iowa are exultingly cited by the Prohibitionists as proof that their new law is rigidly enforced. The drunkards cannot get rum, and so go mad.

Georgia is fertile in imagination as well as in magnetic girls. A Cuthbert farmer tells of a swamp toad which carried off a pig, but could not pull his captive through the fence.

By a new marbleizing process the body of a human being may be turned into a substance resembling stone, at a cost of about $25. The discoverer of the process has marbleized dogs and monkeys on his lawn.

Lost.

BY BLAKE PAXSON.

AUNT HELEN remarked just now that I had "looked kinder peaked ever since I came from Barton's Corner, but to-day I looked downright sick and as white as a sheet."

She had not seen the letter I took from the post-office—a broad, glossy envelope, directed in a firm, manly hand.

She did not see me go to my room and open it with shaking fingers.

I knew what would fall out—snowy wedding-cards tied with narrow white ribbon!

To-day—even while I write—they are in the church, the man I have loved with a life's devotion, and his bride.

I must love him no more.

I pray for him and his wife; I may be their friend—true, earnest, sincere; but my love must die now—to-day.

Connie thought it was very hard I should come to Aunt Helen's just when she was busy with her trousseau; but there were others to help her, and I—I could not bear it.

Barton's Corner was but a tiny cluster of cottages when my father and Hilman Crosley started the woolen mills there and made a fortune.

Each of them married the other's sister, and Constance Crosley and I were not only cousins, but companions from our cradles.

When Hilman Crosley died, ten years ago, father wound up the affairs of the firm and sold the mills, retiring from business a very rich man, but fretting for employment.

He built a magnificent home in what was then a flourishing town around the mills; but he did not live long, and when he died mamma and Aunt Lizzie Crosley, with mamma's brother—my Uncle Charlie Wilton—all lived together in the big house that was my father's last piece of worldly work.

The mills were bought by a company whose foreman, Stephen Dempster, was brought into contact with our family during his business intercourse with father. Finding him a gentleman by birth, education, and manner, father made him welcome in our home circle.

From the hour when Stephen Dempster's frank, noble face, and tall, manly figure first came before me I loved him.

I did not define the pleasure it gave me to see him in those days.

But I know now why I felt utterly happy in his presence, restless when he was absent.

When father died, Stephen Dempster became our close, intimate friend.

Uncle Charlie was then in Scotland, and Stephen was as a son to my mother, as a dear brother to Connie and me.

A dear brother!

Even in my own heart I called him so then.

And soon, in return for all he gave to us in time, sympathy, and attention, he began to demand from me the same, half-unconsciously.

He was alone in Barton's Corner, boarding with the clergyman, Mr. Patterson, and I think, when once he found a friend to sympathize with him, it was an unutterable relief to him to take that friend into full confidence.

Connie used to yawn and walk off when we got "stupid," as she called us when business affairs occupied our attentions; but it interested me deeply to hear all the vexations and trials of Stephen Dempster's position.

The mills were owned by a company, who, throwing all the work and all the responsibility upon the foreman, hindered and hampered him on every side.

"They are badly managed," Stephen said with biting emphasis.

"Managed by a man who is expected to run them without expense. Our profits are falling off every month, because no part of them will be allowed for improvements. Oh!" he cried, suddenly, "if I only owned the mills!"

And then he added, in a low, confidential tone:

"But I shall probably be discharged. The company are tired of their speculation, and are talking of selling out the whole concern."

But they did not, and the whole concern, in spite of Stephen's efforts, became a failure.

It was early in the fall when he came to tell me the tidings.

"To think they will fail to ruin, probably," he said, "while I must go into the world again and look for work, leaving all I love here!

"I have hoped against hope, but it is all in vain."

My heart-beats nearly choked me, but my voice did not falter as I said:

"You may obtain the same position in a new company."

"No; for I bear the whole blame of the failure here.

"And if I did, what is my paltry salary to offer to a woman who has wealth? I will never stand in the position of a fortune-hunter, even for my own love's sake."

"But if she loves you?" I said.

"I have never asked—I will never ask that question till I can offer her at least a home of my own."

Could I throw myself in his arms?

His love was in his voice and in his eyes.

He loved deeply, earnestly, as he did all things else.

I talked again of the mills.

With ten thousand dollars above the cost of purchase, Stephen was sure he could start the work again in good order, relying upon profits for further improvements and repairs, and the mills would be sold for a mere song.

"They are so thoroughly disgusted," Stephen said, speaking of the company, "that they would catch at any offer. Nobody will buy. Money is not very plentiful, and any experienced person can see that there must be a heavy outlay at the outset."

"Do you think six or seven thousand dollars would buy the mills?" I asked, almost afraid of derision, knowing how much they had cost to erect, and what handsome fortunes had been made in them.

"I am positive it would; but it might as well be ten millions, as far as I am concerned."

"Have you no property?" I asked.

"A tumble-down house and barren farm in Aberdeenshire," he said, laughing—"a legacy from my grandmother."

There was no more said of the mills, but I made it my business to go to Warminster, saw the lawyer who managed our property, and out of my abundant means opened the way to independence for the man I loved.

I do not claim to have been disinterested or unselfish.

I loved Stephen Dempster, and I believed he loved me.

I thought to be repaid a thousandfold when he came to me, a prosperous man, and asked me to be his wife.

My first happiness came when he brought to me the good news I knew was coming, but which was so totally sunden to him, and claimed my usual sympathy and counsel.

"It seems incredible," he said, "An offer of twelve thousand pounds for a farm I would have gladly taken five hundred for! Mr. Mason, a lawyer in Warminster, writes to me and says the money will be paid as soon as I sign the papers."

"But," I said, hypocritically, "there may be minerals there. You may lose upon the sale."

"I'll take the risk. To own these mills, to run them on my own plan, to stay in Barton's Corner, I would sell all the coal in Scotland if I owned it."

So the bargain was made, and all winter I lived in a fool's paradise. Every new plan was submitted to me. I coaxed workmen to stay. I made suggestions founded upon memories of father's plans. And Connie would flit about like a butterfly in her pretty dresses, and laugh at our gravity, or break in upon our serious consultations with her songs.

It was the first proof of Stephen's brightening hopes that he began for the first time to follow Connie to the piano, to chat with her upon light, gay subjects, to compliment her in courtly language.

And she would smile and blush, and tell me, in confidence, that really Stephen was wonderfully improved since he bought the mills.

Spring found me blind still.

A lovely day in May tempted me to loiter in the garden, and I was dreaming of the future I had built with golden fingers and rosy hopes, when I heard Connie's voice in the summer-house.

Connie almost lived in the garden, so I was not surprised; but a moment later Stephen spoke:

"Why, my darling, it will be no news to your cousin. Months ago I told her of my love for you, my despair at my poverty; and because she has so often spoken hopefully of my success in wooing, I have kept up a brave heart. But tell me again, Connie—my Connie—that you love me."

I went to the house stunned. I gained the room Connie and I shared, and I tried to realize it all.

"Stephen loves Connie!"

I kept repeating it over and over, but the words conveyed no meaning to my mind. Yet when Connie came to tell me her sweet secret and claim my congratulations I could listen and talk, and even meet Stephen without betraying myself.

Nobody thought it strange I should visit my Aunt Helen a hundred miles from home.

I have often been here, and Connie's pouting at my resolution to stay till October had no effect.

I think mother guessed my secret, but said nothing—only smoothed my way and talked away any appearance of oddity at my absence on the wedding-day.

If I were only sure Connie would make Stephen happy I could be reconciled; but she is so silly, so shallow.

What did he see in her?

Her beautiful face, her childlike manners, have won him; but will they keep his love?

Will he not miss sympathy and intelligent companionship?

I may not question.

By this time these two I love—these two, I repeat—are married, and no one shall ever know whose unknown gift smoothed the way to their bridal.

And I will go home to mother, knowing I shall meet no voice or face to remind me of my lost love and hope, and praying only that I may be ever a true friend to Connie and Connie's husband.

PEOPLE have been very busy in France lately, predicting the terrible consequences which will ensue from the re-establishment of divorce. Here is one of the most terrible of all. A young man gets a divorce and marries a second time; but the mother of his first wife has been divorced too, and has married the father of his second wife. Thus the young man has changed his wife, but not his mother-in-law.

Humorous.

When is coffee like the soil? When it is ground.

The woman question—May I order a new bonnet?

What three letters turns a girl into a woman? Age.

Beyond the seize—The man who flees from the sheriff.

What is a lamp-post with its lamp taken away? A lamp-lighter.

When may a man call his wife boney? When she has a large comb in her head.

Starving one's self to death is a fast way of committing suicide. It is also a slow way.

A farmer is contented with his lot when he has had the grass cut on it, for then he wants no mower.

Love, some one says, destroys the appetite. That man evidently never was in the vicinity of an ice cream saloon with his best girl.

What is the difference between photography and the whooping cough? One makes the similies, and the other makes six families.

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HER LOT.

It's hard when woman must confess
  Another is more fair than she,
Or than her neighbor knoweth less
  Of what a woman's sphere should be;
And that she ne'er was asked to wed,
  Or that her lover older is—
To own she was in love misled—
  That tho' her heart was iron, yet his
Preferred her wealth, more than herself;
  That now her locks are turning gray,
And Time has laid her on the shelf,
  A victim of his bitter fray.
Of these the truth, tho' full of care,
  When forced or driven to the wall,
She may admit, but cannot bear
  One charge most hated of them all—
'Tis this: She'll to the last withstand
She bought her sealskin second-hand.

—WM. MACKINTOSH.

Facetiæ.

When is an artist like a cook? When he is drawing a little duck.

On what day in the year do women talk the least? The shortest day.

A self-made sculptor goes a head of himself when he makes his own bust.

Why is a conductor of music like the telegraph? Because he beats time.

Not a case for oculists—The teacher who has a pretty pupil in his mind's eye.

What is the oldest piece of furniture in the world? The multiplication table.

The professional thief is the only man who believes in doing everything exclusively upon his own hook.

"There is something crooked about this," remarked the teacher, as he took a bent pin away from a scholar.

When may a man be said to be truly in advance of his age? When he's knocked into the the middle of next week.

Whose profession is at once the hardest and the easiest? The musicians—because he works when he plays, and plays when he works.

In what respect do time and a mule resemble one another? In the fact that is is better to be ahead of both time and a mule than behind either of them.

An exchange says that a Cincinnati dairyman was recently drowned. It is supposed that the well-sweep broke, and he was carried down into the well with the bucket.

Irish professor in chemistry: "The substance you see in this phial is the most deadly of all poisons. A single drop placed on the tongue of a cat is enough to kill the strongest man."

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A Dakota lawyer was recently arrested for stealing wood, but such was the power of his eloquence that he made the jury believe that he was only walking in his sleep, and thought that he was placing flowers on his first wife's grave.

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THE VOLTAIC BELT CO., of Marshall, Michigan, offer to send their celebrated ELECTRO-VOLTAIC BELT and other ELECTRIC APPLIANCES, on trial for thirty days, to men (young or old) afflicted with nervous debility, loss of vitality and manhood, and all kindred troubles. Also for rheumatism, neuralgia, paralysis, and many other diseases. Complete restoration to health, vigor and manhood guaranteed. No risk is incurred, as thirty days trial is allowed. Write them at once for illustrated pamphlet, free.

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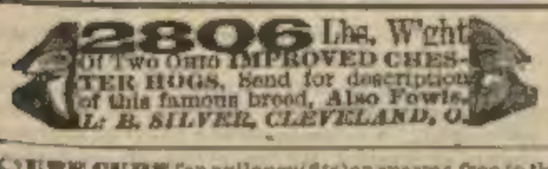
☞ **When our readers answer any Advertisement found in these columns they will confer a favor on the Publisher and the advertiser by naming the Saturday Evening Post.**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The list on the left is a partial record of the presents to be given to the subscribers of the FARM, FIELD AND FIRESIDE Sept. 1st. The publisher will pay the following **extra 179 Cash** Premiums to its new subscribers: **FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS** for the first correct answer, **$400** for the second correct answer, and **$200** for the third correct answer, and **$100** for the fourth, and **$50** each to the next ten, and **$10** each to the next fifteen, and **$1** each to the next 150 correct answers to this question: **Where is the first place in the Bible that Partridge is mentioned?** These premiums are only offered to new subscribers to the FARM, FIELD AND FIRESIDE, a large twenty-eight page Family and Agricultural paper, bound, stitched and cut, the subscription price of which is $1 per year; 50 cents for six months. We already have **150,000** subscribers, who pronounce it to be the best family paper in the world. Each competitor for one of the above prizes must send either 50 cents or $1.00 with their answer. Those whose answers are received first get these cash premiums. All those who send **50 cents** will received the paper six months and a numbered receipt **good for one present** September 1st. Those who send **$1.00** will receive the paper **one year** and **two receipts** good for **two presents** September 1st. Every one who holds a receipt will get a present valued at from 25 cents to $1,000. Send your answer quick, you will get a prize now or one sure September 1st. Money will be sent immediately to the successful ones. Send remittance by Registered Letter, P. O. Orders, Postal Notes or Express. Postage stamps taken.

50 U. S. Gov't Bonds $100 each	$5,000
1 U. S. $1,000 Bond	1,000
20 U. S. Greenbacks, $100 each	2,000
20 U. S. Greenbacks, $50 each	1,000
50 U. S. Greenbacks, $20 each	1,000
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Ladies' Department.

FASHION CHAT.

TWO new materials that have lately appeared may be added to the already lengthy list of fabrics for summer toilettes.

One of these is Ninghia etamine a rather rough and coarse-looking tissu, but exceedingly light, and, what will be a very great advantage in the eyes of most ladies, not likely to become too popular and common.

It is woven in one color only, or in two colors to produce a shot effect.

Lois Jaspe is a closer and rather thicker fabric of a similar description, and equally original and uncommon.

But these are usually employed for the polonaise, or tunic and corsage, over a tucked skirt of shot silk,

The choice of light fabrics is unusually large and varied this season, especially amongst washing materials, such as the fine embroidered or printed lawns, the cambrics, and muslins, printed or embroidered like the lawns, and the laces and embroideries pure and simple.

A great many of these admirably pretty toilettes are made in dressy styles, but the cambrics for morning wear are simpler, although by no means wanting in character and stylish originality.

A new model, new in style and in coloring, is of fine pale blue cambric sprinkled with small dark violet flowers.

The skirt is in fine flat pleats fastened closely down on to the foundation skirt, and flowing freely at the edge only, above a series of pipings in blue and violet and white lace flounces.

The polonaise, also made of the cambric, opens below the waist to form short round paniers, one of which is caught up at the side with a flat bow of prune satin ribbon, the long loops and ends falling half-way down the skirt.

The back drapery is in the now fashionable style of straight pleats cut with the back of the bodice, and arranged in two large triple box-pleats, like those in a dressing-gown, flat at the top, and spreading out in fan-shape at the edge.

This straight drapery is remarkably well adapted for washing dresses destined for seaside and country wear, when an accomplished laundress, equal to the task of ironing elaborate draperies, is not always to be found.

The sleeve is pleated to the wrist and then falls free, forming a kind of flounce. A lace plastron completes the dress in front.

The same style of dress is pretty in light tan-colored voile, the skirt trimmed with four graduated bands of ruby velvet. The voile polonaise is like that already described, except that the sleeves are plain and finished off with a velvet parement.

A third model is in bronze satin and merveilleuse; the pleated skirt is of satin; the paniers are also of satin, but the bodice is of merveilleuse cut like a pointed corsage in front, and joining the box-pleats at the back, like a redingote.

A charming fashion for summer toilettes, and which is daily becoming more popular, is that of the corsage slightly open at the neck, with a scarf of tulle, gauze, or crape, crossed on the chest and passing under a white waist-band, the two ends of the scarf forming a little drapery over the hips and tied in a bow or knot at the back.

The style is sometimes adopted for visiting costumes, a long fichu of fine lace being crossed over the bright-colored waistcoat of surah or foulard, and tied at the back on the tournure.

Very pretty and becoming, too, are the large single revers crossing the bust from the shoulder on one side to the hip on the other side, where they end in a point, the draperies of the skirt caught up on the same side to meet the point, and fastened to it with a metal clasp or a flat bow of ribbon.

On some dresses the revers is replaced by a fichu ending in a point on the hip in the same manner as the revers, but continued round the neck like a collar, and terminating under the long side of the fichu on the chest.

Velvet covered with lace or embroidery forms very handsome revers, but many are made of bead and silk embroidered velvet or satin, or of thickly encrusted jet embroidery for mourning toilettes.

Lace or embroidery alone are frequently used for the revers and fichus on lighter dresses, or folds of soft surah edged with lace.

In a very simple but stylish costume of plain and embroidered tussore, the centre part of the skirt is tucked, a deep flounce of embroidered tussore falling below the tucks over a plain band of dark green velvet edging the underskirt.

The polonaise is gauged in front; the left side is plain, but on the right a long revers of green velvet nearly covered with embroidery crosses the figure from the right shoulder to the left hip.

The embroidered tussore is pleated in here to a point, and meets the pleats draping a panier of tussore edged with embroidery, the other end of which is draped high on the tournure on the right side under the puff.

A very small panier on the left side fills the space between the point of the revers and the back drapery.

The parements are like the revers, and consist of embroidered tussore laid on green velvet.

In a dressy dinner toilette of brocbe the fichu is of beaded lace, and ends in a point on the left hip under a handsome metal clasp or ornament.

From the lower end of this ornament a wide breadth of similar lace falls in a pleated panel to the edge of the skirt, the pleats widening out as they approach the edge.

The least observant of our readers cannot fail to have noticed the gradual but steady growth of the tendency to adopt simple modes and more flowing lines, especially in the skirts of dresses made of very rich materials.

The straight pleated breadths that now so often take the place of puffed back drapery, redingotes with their flat paneled sides, and evening toilettes with their plain skirts and long, straight regal trains, all show the direction in which fashion is tending.

Foundation skirts are still, it is true, rather narrow, but the dress skirt over it is of more than reasonable width, and it may be predicted with tolerable safety that before long the foundation skirt will either follow the example of the real dress skirt, and be increased in width, or it will be dispensed with altogether.

The casaquin bodice is a convenient mode that will be much in vogue for traveling costumes; it is made in the same way as the Parisian blouse—that is, gauged at the waist, front and back, and fastened round the waist with a silk cord, but is considerably shorter than the blouse.

It is usually made of dark green, grenat, or blue Indian cashmere, and the tunic is of the same material draped over a skirt of shot silk.

The collar, revers, parements, and a soft cravat are all made of shot silk to match, and the whole costume is very becoming to young ladies with slender figures.

Redingotes will also be popular for traveling costumes; many are now made with the sleeves pleated at the shoulder and at the wrist.

Very few polonaises and redingotes are made of shot materials, but the skirts of such costumes are frequently of shot silk, and trimmed in a very pretty fashion with a series of bias bands of silk or velvet in the two colors of the shot silk, the colors alternating with each other.

Pelerines of every description are worn this summer, either made of material matching the dress or of some totally different fabric.

Some are very small, ganged to fit the neck, but others like the Mazarin pelerine, nearly reach the waist.

Others again are longer still, and then they are draped up at the waist with a bow sewn to the back and tied in front.

The edge is trimmed with passementerie, especially that of gold beads and fine black or brown cord.

These long pelerines are often made of the dress material, but are frequently seen in brocbe material with a large pattern, either silk gauze or cashmere, with large velvet spots or other designs.

Almost any style of corsage will bear a pelerine, except those in the casaquê form, opening over a waistcoat of a different color and material.

Fireside Chat.

LARDING AND BONING.

[CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK.]

COOKS who are afraid to lard the breasts of game or poultry, frequently content themselves with barding the same, in order to prevent dryness.

Barding is, compared with larding, what shall I say?

Will it be considered a desecration of poetry if I say it is as "moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine?"

This is really a statement of the fact, however. It is an attendant form of the same thing.

In barding, the flesh likely to dry in cooking is swathed in a slice of fat bacon instead of having the bacon inserted in it.

This is easy enough; but care must be taken to have the bacon cut thin, and also to put it down before a quick fire during roasting.

Also, the bacon should be removed a few minutes before the bird is taken down, otherwise the breast may not be properly browned.

I have already said that dry meats are the ones usually selected for larding or barding.

The reason of this is, of course, obvious. So far as birds are concerned, the breast only is operated upon as a rule; in hares, on the contrary, the backs and thighs are covered; and in meats the bacon is inserted into the whole of the upper surface.

When meats have been larded, they must be either roasted or braised.

Braising is a superior way of stewing meat in good gravy, with vegetables and flavoring ingredients.

This mode of cookery is very popular in France, where a pan for the purpose is employed, constructed to hold live embers in the lid, so that the cooking can be carried on above as well as below.

An ordinary stewpan with a closely-fitting lid is, however, generally used for the purpose.

The meat is placed in a stewpan not much larger than itself, upon a savory bed of vegetables and herbs, gravy is poured round it; buttered paper is put over it, and it is very gently stewed till done.

Boning meat and poultry is another of those operations which calls for practiced skill, and which it is so very desirable that cooks should understand.

The unfortunate fact connected with this business is that few but professed cooks are equal to it, while it would be especially valuable to other than professional cooks, because it assists economy.

Take, for example, the case of a shoulder of mutton. I have heard experienced housekeepers say:

"Under no circumstances is a shoulder of mutton an economical joint. It costs less per pound than the leg, but it contains so large a proportion of fat and bone that it must be unprofitable."

Sometimes people who want a small roast are deluded into buying half a shoulder of mutton. And what is the consequence?

The fortunate individual who is first served gets a handsome slice, the second has one almost as good, and then there is a stop to the proceedings.

The carver is in a state of desperation. If he is unaccustomed to his work, he slashes and fumes without effect: if accustomed to it, he turns the joint over and takes a portion from underneath; then he arrives at a standstill.

He turns it back, and tries once more, but to no purpose. The joint looks as if it were scarcely touched; but it is a delusion, for little can be got from it.

The same disappointment attends the purchase of the fillet end of the leg of mutton.

With the bone in it how satisfactory it looks on the dish—how unsatisfactory it is when cut into!

When one or two good slices have been taken, there are nothing but scraps to be had.

Amateur cooks are often advised to buy a good-sized leg of mutton and use it for three hot dinners—cutlets from the middle one day, boiled knuckle end another day, roast fillet a third day.

Oh, what a fall is there when fillet's turn comes round, if the amateur has not been advised to get the joint boned before cooking it!

Boned, stuffed with veal forcemeat, tied compactly together, roasted and served with good gravy, the fillet is excellent: cooked in its original condition it is a decided fraud.

The same remarks apply to loin of mutton. This is generally considered a delicious though an extravagant joint.

I am not going to praise it as a profitable one, though I can say that if boned it will go half as far again as if left unboned.

Somehow the quantity of lean meat will seem to be increased when the bones are removed.

Ordinarily with loin of mutton the diners leave the bones half-picked, cut off the fat, eat the lean piece from the middle of each chop, and get up hungry.

But when the joint is boned, and the fat liberally pared away, to be rendered down for frying fat, the diners have a good time, for they receive a goodly slice of delicious lean meat on their plates.

The carver has a good time, for he has the easy task of cutting straight through a succulent roll and finding an abundance to dispense to his friends.

And the economical spectator has not to endure an agonizing time, for he will not see unlimited waste perpetrated. Thus general satisfaction will prevail.

ORCHARDS.—Many orchards should not be left in sod three years. If an orchard is thrifty and healthy the sodding may be safe. If it is desired to bring up debilitated orchards with green manures, some annual crop will answer better. Rye is good because easily and cheaply grown. Corn is also good. Buck-wheat is of great value on light, warm soils, but is apt to sour heavy ones. Some of the botanical relatives of the clover are of great value, as they all contain nitrogen in great quantities. Field peas, vetches, alfalfa, etc. are among these plants.

IT is said that railway companies employ only brave men as conductors, because none but the brave deserve the fare.

Correspondence.

EDIS.—"Reading between the lines" is a figure of speech which means that a writer implies or suggests more than he says outright.

E. E.—(1.) It is still published but we do not know the name of the editor. (2.) We do not know, but presume it is George Wilkes. You can get such a book. Write to Lee & Walker, Music Publishers, Phila.

A. B.—Pearce is one of a number of surnames which spring from the baptismal name Peter. Other examples of names having the same origin are Piers, Pierce, Pears, Peers, Parr, Petersons, Piersons, Parsons, Porsons; Parkins, Perkins, Peterkins, Parkinson, Purkis, Perrens, Parrots, etc.

READER.—Tennyson's "Dream of Fair Women" contains pictures of "fair renowned brides of ancient songs," and was suggested, as the poet himself says, by Chaucer's "Legend of Good Women." The personages introduced into it are Helen, Iphigenia, Cleopatra, Jephtha's daughter, Rosamond, Eleanor, and Fulvia.

F. R. S.—The idea of pouring oil on the troubled waters is one of immemorial antiquity. Until recently it was supposed to be a mere figure of speech, but it has now been shown by experiment that it expresses a fact which was no doubt known to the ancients, but was for ages lost sight of as a fact, although the idea remained.

MATTIE.—For cleaning the teeth, there is nothing better than the borax wash, made by dissolving two ounces of borax in three pints of water. Before it is quite cold, add one teaspoonful of tincture of myrrh and one tablespoonful of spirits of camphor. One wineglassful of this, added to half a pint of tepid water, is sufficient for each application, to be used once every day.

LAURENCE.—The invention of gun-powder is generally attributed to a German monk called Berthold Schwartz, in 1320. According to some authorities, however, it was known at a very early period to the Chinese, and is said to be described in an Arabic MS. of the year 1249 and also in the works of Roger Bacon, 1293. So it is impossible to say for certain who was the author of the invention.

JACK.—It would be a difficult matter to say "who first discovered tobacco," and who originated the name. According to Humboldt, the term "tobacco" was used by the Caribbees to designate the pipe in which they smoked, which term was transferred, by the Spaniards, from the pipe to the herb itself, and so was adopted in other countries. Others, again, say that the name is derived from the province of Tabaco, in St. Domingo, whence it was introduced into Europe, in 1559, by a Spanish grandee. It was afterward taken to Paris, and in the form of a powder is said to have been used by Catherine de Medici.

A. Y.—The origin of astronomy is in far antiquity, and although somewhat involved in obscurity, it may probably be attributed to the Chaldeans. At any rate, they are the first people who made any considerable progress in astronomy. To them are attributed, among other improvements and discoveries, the following: The invention of the dial; the signs, names, and figures of the zodiac; the division of the elliptic into twelve equal parts; and of the day into twelve equal hours, etc. Callisthenes, who accompanied Alexander the Great on his expeditions, brought back with him, it is said, from Babylon, a series of astronomical observations, extending over 1,903 years, or dating back 2,234 years before the Christian Era.

NANO.—The great remedy for inattention is—attention. Sometimes a disposition to wander is thought is the result of a low state of health, and if this is the case with you, you should take a tonic. But more frequently it is the consequence simply of mental and moral indolence. In this case you must exercise your will. Determine to concentrate your mind upon the task which demands your attention, and check yourself immediately you find your thoughts flitting to something else. For your encouragement, we may say that your case is by no means exceptional, except, perhaps, in degree. Many public speakers might be named to whom these hints would be useful.

ROBERT S.—(2) There are many systems of shorthand, but the one most generally used by reporters as well as others, is Pitman's, the fundamental principle of which is that you write by sound and by spelling. We should not recommend you to adopt any of the systems which make it their great boast that they can be mastered in a few hours. We do not believe there is any royal road to reporting. (2) No one can report properly who has not had a fairly good education. He should, at any rate, know his grammar well. (3) To follow a rapid speaker, you would require several years' practice; but, having mastered the system you might, with an hour's practice a day, be able to follow an ordinary speaker in twelve or eighteen months, according to native aptitude.

JUSTIN.—Justin Martyr, who flourished between the years 103 and 167 A.D., was a philosopher who, at the age of thirty, became a Christian, having in vain endeavored to discover truth in heathen philosophy. A voluminous and powerful controversialist, he excited the animosity of an opponent named Crescens, who had him apprehended, with six of his companions, when he was beheaded for refusing to sacrifice to the gods. St. Cyprian (200–258 A.D.), Bishop of Carthage and Primate of Africa, was also celebrated as a theologian. He sold his goods, distributed the proceeds among the poor, lived in retirement, and devoted himself to the study of the Scriptures and theology. He was beheaded under an edict condemning the Christian clergy to death. You may accept these particulars as facts; they are not mere "legends."

MOSCOW.—Are you sure that there are not faults on both sides? Perhaps you are a little unreasonable in your requirements, and do not sufficiently remember that sympathy and consideration are due from as well as to you. "Bear and forbear" should be your motto. We fear you have been brooding over your so-called disappointment, and brought yourself into a morbid state of mind, with regard to the matter of which you complain, and been, no doubt unconsciously, acting a somewhat selfish part. Instead of exhibiting impatience, and a desire to adopt extreme measures, try what a little loving attention to, and consideration for, the wishes of "the weaker vessel" will do. Show this for peace and lover's sake you are willing to sacrifice hobbies, habits, and whatever else may stand in the way of a mutual understanding, and we shall be exceedingly disappointed if you do not find such a course bring about, not only a speedy reconciliation, but a state of perfect love and peace, to which you have apparently been hitherto a stranger.